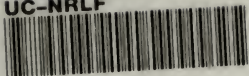
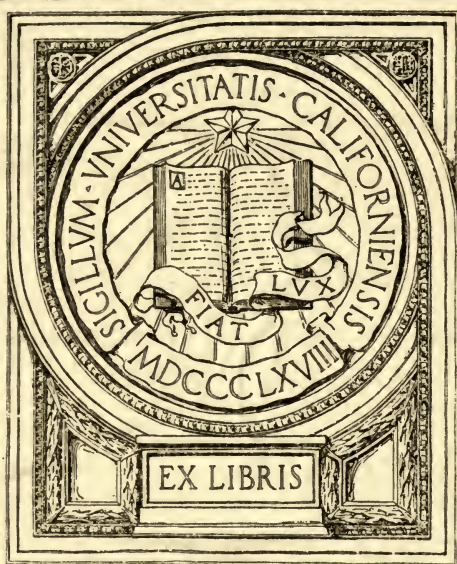


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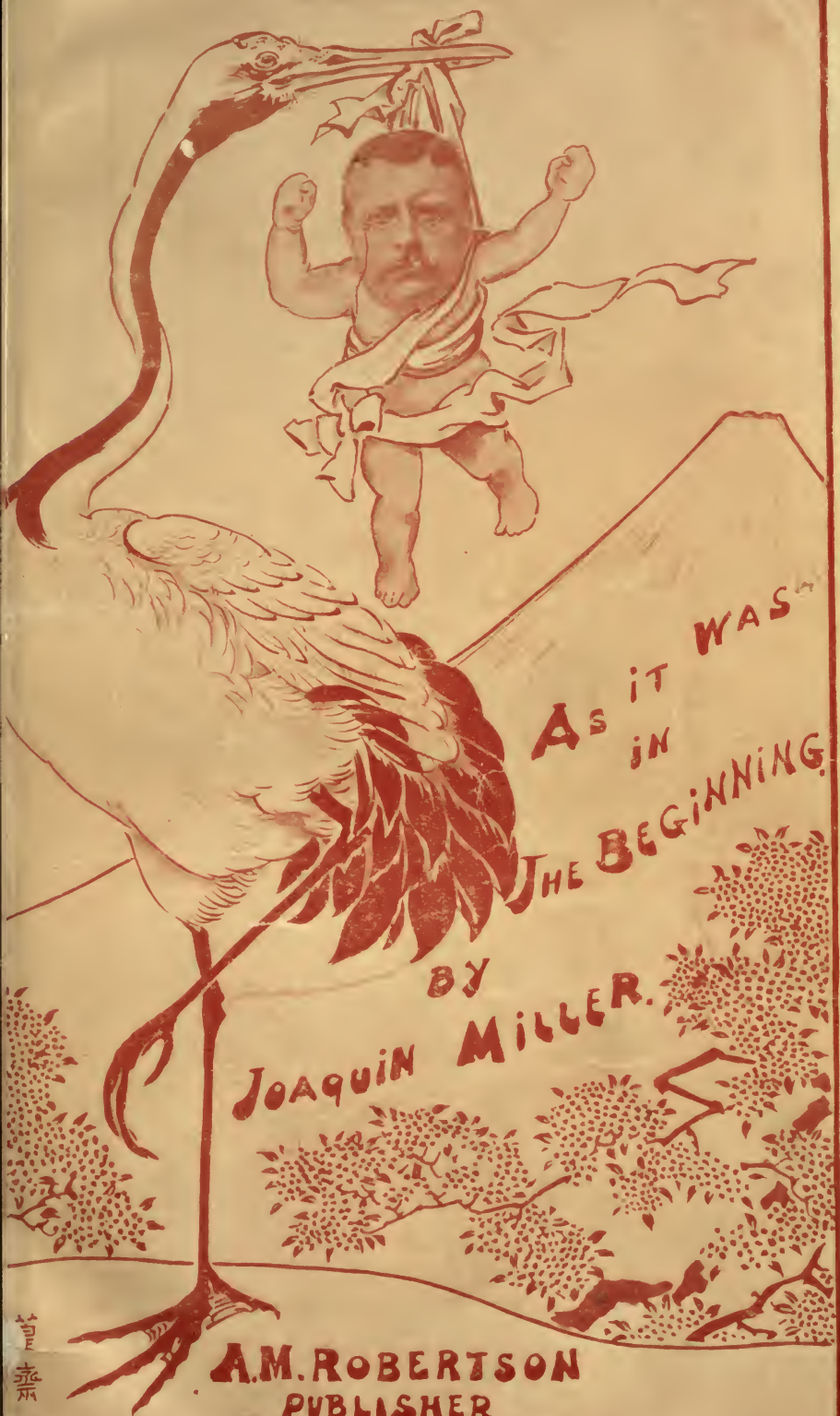
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REESE

As it Was in The Beginning.

A POEM
BY
JOAQUIN MILLER



DEDICATED TO
THE
MOTHERS OF MEN.



REESE

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JOAQUIN MILLER.

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING.

CANTO I.

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

“And the earth was without form and void ; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

“And God said, let there be light : and there was light.”

I

They sat the sundown bank beside,
Beyond the rock-locked Gate of Gold
So like that Golden Horn of old
When Sappho sang and Phaon plied
And silent watched the waning sun.
Ten thousand miles of mobile sea —
This sea of all seas blent as one
Wide, unbound book of mystery,
Of awe, of sibyl prophecy,
Ere yet a ghost or misty ken
Of God's far first beginning when
Vast darkness lay upon the deep,
And when God's spirit moved upon
Such waters cradled in such sleep —
Such night as never yet knew dawn,
Such night as wierd atallaph weaves
But never mortal man conceives.

II

He said — his face was leaned to hers,
As warmest of all worshippers : —
“In the beginning ? Where and when,
Before the fashioning of men
Swung first His high lamp to and fro,
To light us as we please to go ?
And where the waters, dark deeps when
God spake and said, ‘Let there be light’ ?”

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

They still house where they housed, as then
Dark curtained with majestic night —
Dusk Silence in travail of light
That knew not man or man's, at all —
Black battle-ship or steel-built wall.

III

“ Aye, these, these were the waters when
God spake and knew His white first-born,
That far, first, new-born baby morn,
Such eons ere the noise of men.
Yon Southern Cross, high-built about
The deep, set in a town of stars,
Commemorates, forbids a doubt
That here first fell God's golden bars —
Red bars, with soft, white silver blent,
Broad sown from sapphire firmament.

IV

“ Behold what wave-lights leap and run
Swift up the shale from out the sea !
Inwove with silver, golden sun
Light lingers in the tawny mane
Of wild oats waving lazily
Far up the climbing poppy^b plain,
Far up yon steeps of dusk and dawn —
Black night, white light, inwound as one.
But when, when fell that far, first dawn
With ways of gold to walk upon ?

V

“ I know not when, but only know
That darkness lay upon yon deep,
Lay cradled, as a child asleep,
And that God's spirit moved upon
These waters ere the burst of dawn
When first His high lamps to and fro
Shone forth to guide which way to go.

VI

“ I only know that Silence keeps
High court forever still hereon,
That Silence lords alone these deeps,
The silence of God's house and keeps
Inviolatè yon water's face,
As if still His abiding place,
As ere that far, first burst of dawn
Ere fretful man set sail upon.

VII

‘ The deeps,’ he mused, “ are still as when
Dusk Silence kept her curtained bed
Low moaning for the birth of dawn,
When she should push that night aside,
As some dread nightmare most abhorred —
When she might laughing look upon
God's first-born glory, holy Light,
As when fond Eve, exulting cried,
In mother-pain, with mother-pride,
‘ Behold the fair first-born of men,
Behold a man-child of the Lord !
I gat a man-child of the Lord ! ’ ”

VIII

“ Aye, Silence seems some maid at prayer,
God's arm about her when she prays
And where she prays and everywhere,
Or storm-strewn days or sundown days —
What ill to Silence can befall
Since Silence knows no ill at all ?

IX

“ Vast Silence seems some twilight sky
That leans as with her weight of stars
To rest, to rest, no more to roam,
But rest and rest eternally.
She loosens and lets down the bars,
She brings the kind-eyed cattle home,
She breathes the fragrant field of hay
And heaven is not far away.

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

X

“The deeps of soul are still the deeps
Where stately silence ever keeps
High court with calm Nirvana, where
No shallows break the noisy shore
Or beat, with sad, incessant roar,
The fettered, fevered world of care
As noisesome vultures fret the air.

XI

“The star-sown seas of thought are still,
As when God's plowmen scatter corn
Along the mellow grooves at morn,
In patient trust to wait His will.
The star-sown seas of thought are wide
But voiceless, noiseless, deep as night :
Disturb not these, the silent seas
Are sacred unto souls allied
As golden poppies unto bees.
Here, from the first, rude giants wrought,
Here delved, here scattered stars of thought
To grow, to bloom in years unborn,
As grows the gold-horned yellow corn.”

XII

As one beholding some sweet nook
Of wild oats mantling yellow, pink,
So dewy new that never yet
E'en timid rabbit's foot has set,
Will pass, then turn, return to look,
Then pass again to think and think,
Then try to not turn back again,
But try and try to quite forget
And sighing, try and try in vain ;
So you would turn and turn again
To her, her girlish woman's grace —
Full-flowered yet fair baby's face.

XIII

Her wide, sweet mouth, an opened rose,
Pushed out, reached out, as if to kiss ;

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

A mobile mouth in proud repose
This moment, then unlike to this
As storm to calm, as day to night,
As sullen darkness to swift light,
This new-made woman was, this sun
And surged sea interwound in one.

XIV

Her proud and ample lips pushed out
As kissing sea-winds unaware ;
And then they arched in angry pout,
As if she cared yet did not care,
Then lightning lit her great, wide eyes,
As if black thunder walled the skies,
And all things took some touch of her,
The while she stood nor deigned to stir :

XV

Such eyes as compass all the skies,
That see all things yet naught have seen ;
Such eyes of love and sorrow's eyes —
A martyr or a Magdalene.
How sad that all great souls are sad !
How sad that gladness is not glad —
That Love's sad sister is sweet Pain,
That only lips of beauty drain
Life's full-brimmed, glittering goblet dry,
And only drain the cup to die !

XVI

The yellow of her poppy hair
Was as red gold is, when at rest ;
But when aroused was as the west
In sunset flame and then — take care !
Her tall, free-fashioned, supple form
Was now some sudden, tropic storm,
Was now some lily leaned at play.
What sea and sun, sunshine and shower
Full-flowered ere the noon of day,
Full June ere yet the noon of May,

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

This sun-born blossom of an hour —
Precocious Californian flower !

XVII

She answered not but looked away
With brown hand arched above her brow,
As peers a boatman from his prow,
To where white sea-doves wheeled at play.
She watched them long, then turned and sighed
And looking in his face she cried
While blushing prettily, " Behold,
There is no mateless dove, not one !
And see ! not one unhappy dove.
Ten thousand circling in the sun,
Entangled as the mesh of fate,
Yet each remains as true as gold
And constant courts his pretty mate.
See here ! See there ! Below, above —
I think yon dove would die for love."

XVIII

He watched the shallows spume the shore
Then far at sea his swift eyes swept
Where one tall, stately, snow-white sail
Its silent course majestic kept.
" The shallows murmur and complain,
The shallows turn with wind and tide,
They fringe with froth and moil the main ;
They wail and will not be denied —
Poor, puny babes, unsatisfied !

XIX

" The light-house clings her beetling steep
Toward the rock-sown, ragged shore
Where Scylla and Charybdis roar
And dangers lurk and shallows keep
Mad tumult in the house of sleep.
The shallows moan and moan away —
The deeps have not one word to say.

XX

"I reckon Silence as a grace
That was ere light had name or place ;
A saint enshrined ere hand was laid
To fashioning of man or maid.
For, storm or calm, or sun or shade,
Fair Silence never truth betrayed ;
For, ocean deep or dappled sky,
Loved Silence never told a lie."

CANTO II.

I

From out the surge of Sutro's steep,
Beyond the Gate a rock uprears
So sudden, savage, unawares
The very billows start and leap,
As frightened at its lifted face,
So shoreless, sealess, out of place ;
A sea-washed, surge-locked isle, as lone
As proud Napoleon on his throne,
His Saint Helena throne, where still
The dazed world in dumb wonder turns
To his high-throned, imperious will
And incense burns and ever burns.
Here huge sea-lions climb and cling,
Despite of surge and seethe and shock,
The topmost limit of the rock,
And one is named Napoleon, king.
Behold him lord the land, the sea,
In stern, unquestioned majesty !

II

She saw, she raised her drooping head
With eager face and cheering said :
"What lusty, upheaved, bull-built neck !
What lungs to lift above the roar !
What captain on his quarter deck
To mock the sea and scorn the shore !



AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

I like that gash across his breast,
I like his ardent, lover's zest ! ”

III

The huge sea-beast uprose, uprose,
As if he now must topple down.
He reached his black and bearded nose
Above his harem, gray, black, brown,
Sleek, shining, wet, or steaming dry,
And mouthed and mouthed against the sky.

IV

What eloquence, what hot love pain !
What land but this, what love but his ?
What isle of bliss but this and this—
To roar and love and roar again ?
What land, what love but this his own,
Loud roaring from his slippery throne !

* * * * *

V

At last her heart was moved and she
Raised her great eyes to his black beard,
Then sudden turned as if she feared
And threw her headlong in the sea,
Another Sappho, all for love,
While Phaon towered still above.
An instant only ; yet once more
That upheaved head, that great bull neck,
That sea-born, bossed, bull-throated roar—
A poise, a plunge, a flash, a fleck,
And far down, caverned in the deep,
Where sea-green curtains swing and sweep
And vari-colored carpets creep,
Soft emerald or amethyst
Two lion lovers kept sweet tryst.

VI

She looked, looked long, then smiled, then sighed
A proud, pure soul unsatisfied.

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

She threw her backward, arms wide out,
And up the poppy spangled steep,
O'er grass set cushions sown in gold,
As she would sleep yet would not sleep.
She reached her wide hands fast about
And grasses, gold and manifold,
Of lowly blossoms, pink and blue,
She gathered in and laughing threw,
With bare-armed, heedless, happy grace —
Threw fragrant handfuls in his face
And then as if to sleep she lay,
A babe nursed at the breast of May —
Lay back with blue eyes to the skies
And clouds of wondrous butterflies:
Such Mariposa blooms in air,
Such bloomy, golden poppy hair !
And which were hers or poppy's gold
Without your touch none could have told ;
And which were butterflies or bloom,
To guess, there was not guessing room,
The while, in quest of sweets or rest
They fanned her face, they kissed her breast.

VII

That face like to a lifted song,
A face of sea-shell tint, with tide
Of springtime flowing fast and strong
And fearless in its maiden pride —
A red rose ambushed in such hair
Of heedless, wind-kissed, poppy gold,
Blown here, blown there, blown anywhere,
Soft-lifting, falling fold on fold,
As made gold poppies where she sat
Turn envious, turn green thereat :
A wise face yet a wilful face,
A face that would not be denied
No more than gipsy winds that race
The sea bank in their saucy pride,
A face that knew, and only knew,
The natural, the human, true.



AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

VIII

Those two round mounds of Nineveh,
What treasures of the past they knew !
But these two round mounds here today
Hold treasures richer far than they,
And prophesies more truly true.
Old Nineveh's twin mounds are dust ;
They only know the ghostly past ;
But these two new mounds hold in trust
The awful future, hold the vast
And unborn empires, land or sea,
Henceforth, for all eternity.
Let pass dead pasts ; far wiser turn
And delve the future ; love and learn.

IX

It seems she dreamed. She slept, we know,
A happy, quiet little space,
Then thrust a right limb far below
And half way turned aside her face,
And then she threw her arms wide out
In sleep and so reached blind about,
As if for something she might find
From fortune-telling, gipsy wind.

X

The soft, warm winds from far away
Were weary and they crept so near,
They lay against her willing ear
As if they had so much to say,
And she, she seemed so glad to hear
The while she loving, sleeping lay
And dreamed of love nor dreamed of doubt,
But laughing, thrust her form far out
And down the fragrant poppy steep
In playful, restless, happy sleep.
She sighed, she heaved her hilly breast,
As one who would but could not rest.

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

XI

How natural, how free, how fair
The while the happy winds on wing,
As larger butterflies, laid bare
A rippled, braided rim of white
And outstretched ankles exquisite —
What ankles, legs, what everything
That makes great woman great and good —
That makes for noblest motherhood !

XII

Such legs as mount the steep of morn,
Such legs as love, not lust, may share,
Such legs as God has shaped to bear
The weight of ages, worlds unborn;
Such legs as Lesbian shrines revealed
When comely, longing mothers kneeled ;
Such legs as Milo dared to hew
And all the clean world longed to view ;
Such legs as Millais loved to draw
When painting tall, Greek girls at play ;
Such legs as blind old Homer saw,
As Marlowe knew but yesterday
When Helen climbed once more for him
Her cloud-topt towers of Illium,

CANTO III.

I

Bright sea-gulls glistened in the sun —
Ten thousand if a single one —
And every sea-dove knew its mate.
Far, far at sea, the Farallones
Sent up a million plaintive moans
From sea-beasts moaning love or hate.
The sun sank weary, flushed and worn,
The warm sea-winds sank tattered, torn,
The sun and sea lay welded, wed ;
The day lay couched upon the deep

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

Half closed, as eyes that close in sleep,
Half closed, as some good book just read.
The sea was an opal sea.
Inlaid in scintillating light,
Yet close about and left and right
The sea lay banked and bossed in night
As black as ever night may be.
The sundown sea all sudden then
Lay argent, pallid, white as death,
As when some great thing dies, as when
A god gasps in one final breath
And heaves full length his somber bed.
The sundown sea now shone, mobile,
Translucent, flaming, molten steel,
Red, green, then tenfold more than red,
And then of every hue, a hint
Of doubloons spilling from the mint,
Alternate, changing, manifold,
Yet melting, minting all to gold.

II

Far mountain peaks flashed flecks of gold
And dashed with dappled flecks the skies.
“Behold,” said he, “the fleecy fold
Now slowly, surely, homeward hies.
Such cobalt blue, such sheep of gold,
Such gold as hath not place nor name
In elsewhere land, because no seer
Hath seen, or daring prophet told
Where stood the loom in past’ral peace
That wove the fair, first golden fleece.
Behold, what gold-flecked flocks of light.
Ten million moving sheep of gold,
Wee lambs of gold that nudge their dams,
Great horned, wrinkled, heady rams.

III

“Slow-shepherded, the golden sheep,
With bent horns lowered to the deep,
Come home ; the hollows of the sea

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

Receive and house them lovingly.
The little lambs of light come home
And house them in the argent foam,
The while He counts them every one,
And shuts the Gate, for day is done.

IV

“Aye, day is done, the dying sun
Sinks wounded unto death tonight ;
A great, hurt swan, he sinks to rest,
His wings all crimson, blood his breast !
With wide, low wings, reached left and right
He sings, and night and swan are one.
What crimson breast, what crimson wings
The while he dies and dying sings !
Yet safe is housed the happy fold,
The golden sheep, the fleece of gold
That lured the dauntless Argonaut,
The fleece that daring Jason sought.
Some far-off day the golden sheep
May rise from resting in the deep.
So let us joy to know the lambs
Of gold are resting with their dams
Where lord and lead the heady rams.”

V

She waking sighed, soft murmuring
As waters from some wood-walled spring :
“Oh happy, huge, horn-headed rams
To guide and lead the golden fleece,
To ward the fold of fat increase
Fast mated to your golden dams !
What bridal gold, what golden bride,
What golden twin lambs, side and side !
Oh happy, happy nudging lambs !
Thrice happy, happy golden dams !”

VI

His face was still against the west ;
For still a flash of gold was there
That would not or that could not rest

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

But seemed some night bird of the air.
At last, with half averted head
And heedlessly, as dreaming said :
“ What banker gathers yonder gold
That sinks, sea-washed, beyond the deeps ?
Lie there no sands to house and hold.
This sunset gold in countless heaps ?
There sure must be some far, fierce land,
Some Guinea shore, some Indus strand,
Some dreamy, palm-set, pathless spot
Where all this sunset gold is stored,
As misers gather hoard on hoard.
There sure must be beyond this sea
Some Argo's gold, some argosy,
Some golden fleece, long since forgot,
To wait the coming Argonaut.”

VII

She sprang up sudden, savagely,
And flushed and paled, looked far away,
Grinding gold poppies with her heel.
She could not say, she could but feel.
She nothing said, because that they
Who really feel can rarely say.
And then she looked up, forth and far,
And pointed to the pale North Star,
The while her color went and came
From pink to white, from frost to flame.

VIII

For this, the one forbidden theme,
The one hard, dread, unquiet dream
That he should go, lead forth and far
Below the tripple Arctic star
As he had planned ; and now to speak,
To hint — she heard with pallid cheek.
Hard had she tried, had fain forgot
How strong, new men were trending far
Toward this still elusive star,
And he their Jason — Argonaut !

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

CANTO IV.

I

How passing fair, how wondrous fair
This daughter of the yellow sun!
Her sunlit length and strength of hair
Seemed sun and gold inwound as one.
How strangely silent, unaware,
Unconscious quite of strength or grace
Or peril of her beauteous face,
She stood, the first-born of a race,
A proud, new race, scarce yet begun.
How tall she stood, how debonair,
To comb her mighty Titian hair!

II

So beautiful she was, as one
From out some priceless picture-book,
You could but love, you had no choice
But love and turn again to look.
How young she was, and yet how old!
Red orange ripened in the sun
Where never hand had reached as yet.
The calm strength of her lifted face,
The low notes of her tuneful voice
Were mint-marks of that wondrous race
But scarcely born nor known as yet
Beyond yon yellow hills that fret
Warm sea-winds with their waving pine;
A princess of that royal line
Of kings who came and silent passed,
Yet, passing, set bold, royal hand
And mighty signet on the land,
And set it there to last and last,
As if in bronzen copper cast.

III

He, too, was born of giant men,
Of men who knew not tears or fears,
Of men full-sexed, yet men who knew

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

Not sex till perfect manhood, when
Men 'gat great men who dared to do ;
'Gat men of heart who dwelt apart,
As Adam dwelt, when giants grew
And men as gods drew ample breath —
Tall Adams with their thousand years,
Ere drunkenness of sex had done
The silly world to willing death ;
Of royal parentage, of true
Nobility, of those who knew
The light, who chased the yellow sun
From sea to sea triumphantly,
And westward fought and westward won,
As never daring man had done.

IV

They housed with God upon the height,
Companioned with the peak, the pine,
They led the red lit firing line.
Walled 'round by room and room and room,
They read God's open book at night,
And drank His star-distilled perfume.
By day they dared their trackless west
And chased the battling sun to rest.

V

Such sad, mad marches to the sea,
Such silent sacrifice, such trust !
Such months of battle, misery,
Such mountains heaped with heroes' dust !
Yet what stout thews the peerless few
Who won the sea at last, who knew
The cleansing fire and laid hold
To hammer out God's house of gold !

VI

Their cities zone the sea of seas,
Their white tents top the mountain's crest.
The coward ? He trenched not with these.
The weakling ? He was laid to rest.

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

Each man stood forth a man, such man
As God wrought not since time began,
Each man a hero, lion each.
Behold what length of limb, what length
Of life, of love, what daring reach
To deep-hived honeycomb ! What strength
This out-door Adam ! He is clean,
As virile nature's vernal green ;
He stands so tall, so clean, he hears
The morning music of the spheres.

VII

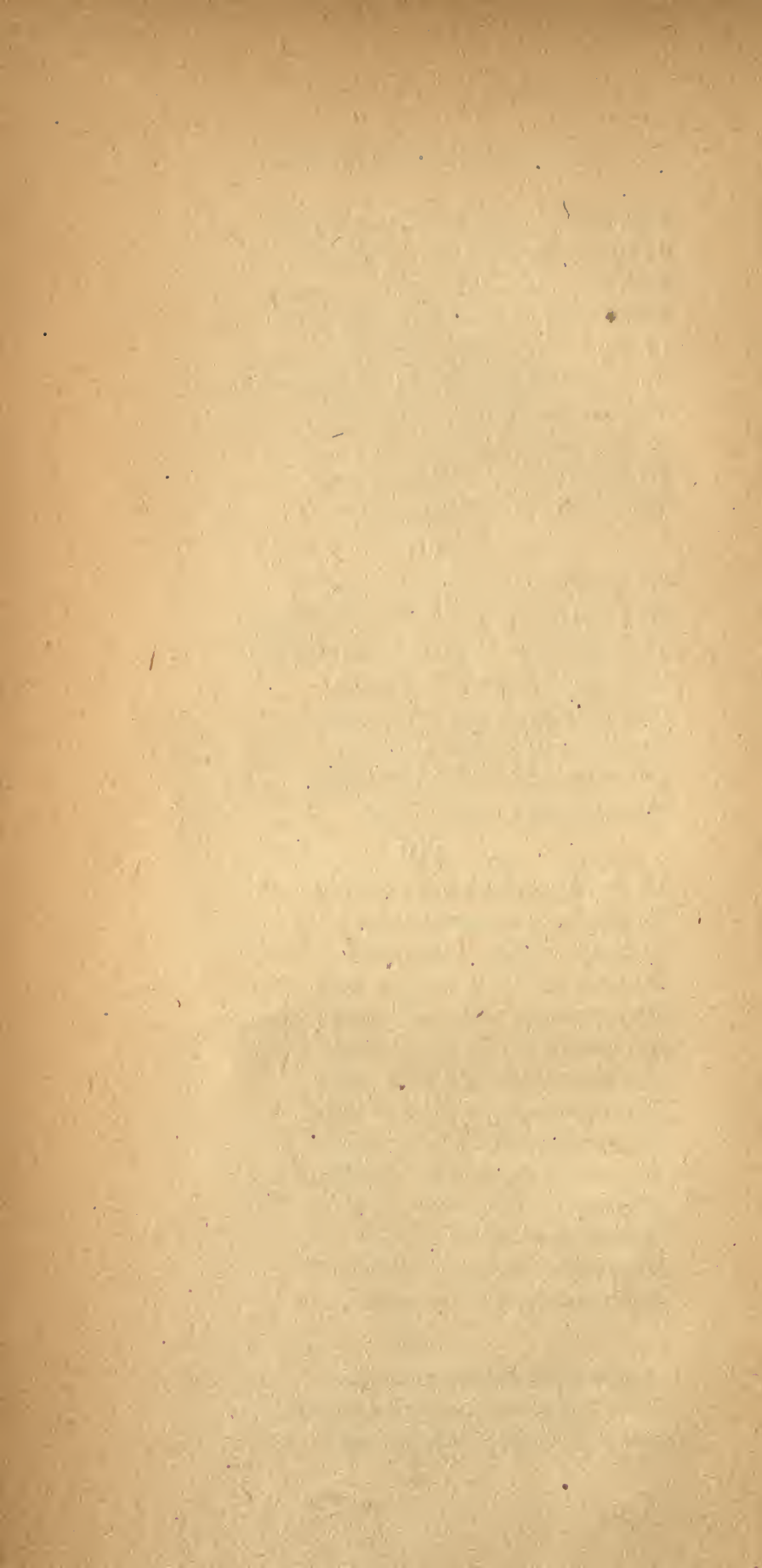
He loved her, feared her, far apart,
He kept his ways and dreamed his dreams ;
He sang strange songs, he tuned his heart
To music of the pines that preach
Such sermons on such holy themes
As only he who climbs can reach
Or comprehend, heart laid to heart ;
For art is heart, as heart is art.

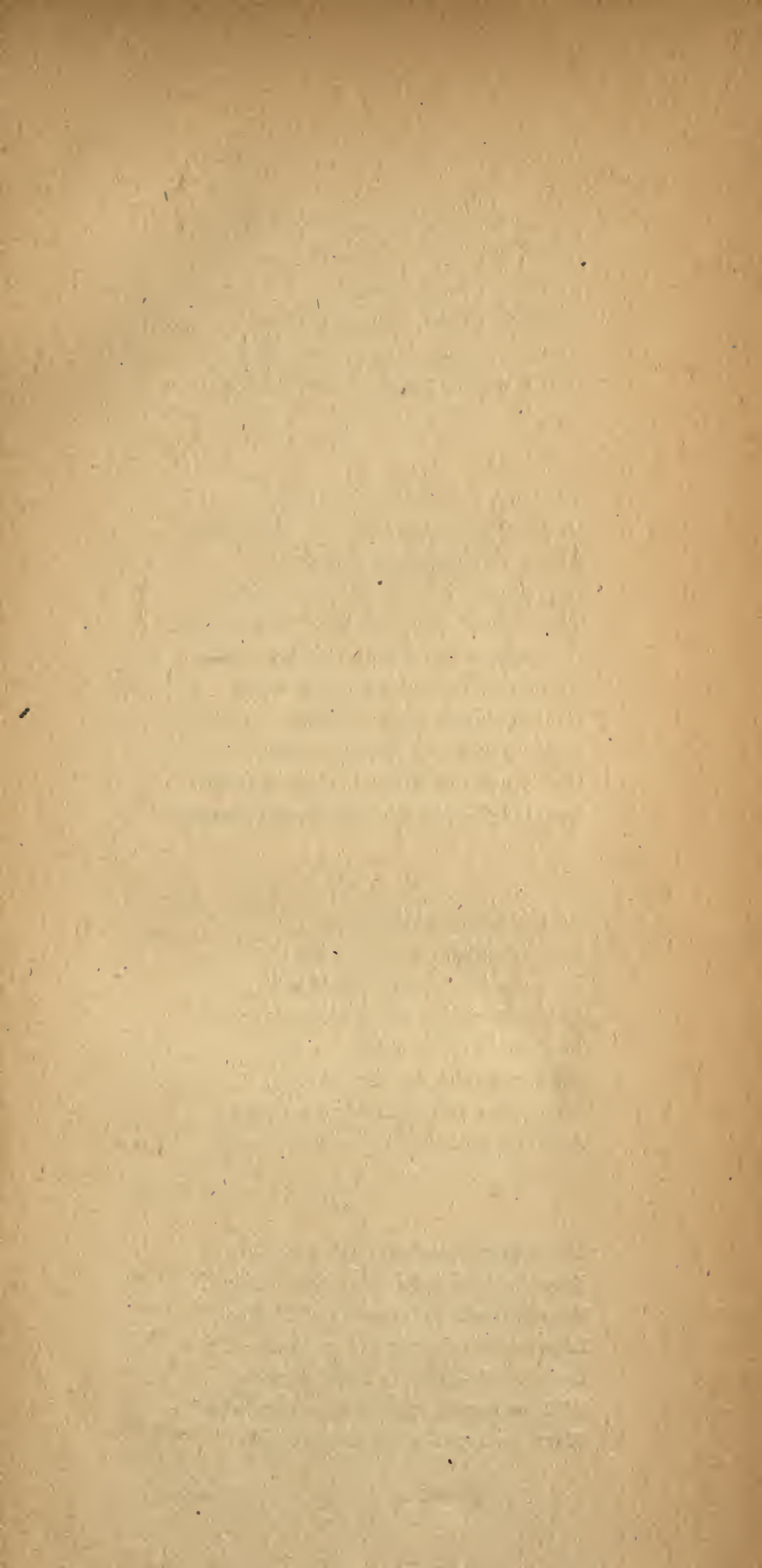
VIII

He would not selfish pluck one rose
To wear upon his breast a day
And let its perfume pass away
With any wind that comes or goes,
Why, he might walk God's garden through
Nor touch a bud nor fright a bird.
The music of the spheres he heard,
The harmony he breathed, he knew.
He never marred God's harmony
With one harsh thought. The favored few
Who cared to live above the sod
And lift glad faces up to God
He knew loved all as well as he,
Had equal rights to rose or tree.

IX

And he must spare all to the day
Their willing feet should pass the way
God in his garden walked at eve.





AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

And as for weaklings who by turn
Would jest or jeer, he could but grieve,
And pity all and silent say,
“Let us lead forth, make fair the way,
By time and stress they, too, will learn
Which way to walk, to love, to turn.”

X

The long, lean Polar bear uprose,
Outreached a claw and bare, black^r sole
Above his battlement of snows
And showed his yellow teeth in vain,
Then 'round about his bleak North Pole
He dragged and clanked his icy chain.
And he who dared not pluck a rose,
As if in chorus with his pine,
Must up and lead the battle line,
Dare pluck the grizzled beard of Death,
Dare laugh at Death with joyous breath.

XI

No idle talk, no idle tears,
No airy sighs, no tales to tell ;
He knew God is, that all is well,
That faith is death to idle fears ;
That death is but a name, a date,
A milestone by the stormy road,
Where you may lay aside your load
And bow your face and rest and wait.

XII

Huge ships. black-bellied, lay below,
Broad, yellow flags from silken Chind;
Round, blood-red banners of Nippon,
Like to their Orient sun at dawn —
Brave battle-ships as white as snow,
With bannered stars tossed to the^jwind,
Warm as a kiss when love is kind.

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

XIII

'Twas night, such soft, sweet, maiden night
As only Californians know,
When nightingales are forth, and when
The Bay lies bathed in mellow light
Blown far from Honolulu's seas —
From sundown seas in afterglow,
When Song sits at the feet of men
And pipes, low-voiced as mated dove,
For love to measure step with love.

XIV

And yet, for all the perfumed seas,
The peace, the silent harmonies,
The two stood mute, estranged before
Her high-built, stately, opened door
High up the terraced, plunging hill
As hushed as death, as white and still.

XV

The moon, amid her yellow fleet,
With full, white sail, moved on and on,
And drew, as loving hearts are drawn,
All seas of earth fast following,
As slow she sailed her sapphire seas.
Then as if pausing, pitying,
She poured down at their very feet
Broad silver ways to walk upon
Which way they would, or east or west,
Which way they would, or worst or best.

XVI

Her voice was low, low leaned her head,
Her two white hands the instant pressed
As if to hush her aching breast,
As if to bind her breaking heart
To silent bear its bitter part,
The while she choking, sobbing, said :
“ Then here, for all our poppy days,
Here, here, the parting of the ways ? ”

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

XVII

“ Aye, so you will it. Here divide
The ways, forever and a day.
You, you—you women lead the way,
You lead where loving men have died,
You women lead to hollow lands,
Of bloodless hearts and nerveless hands.
I will not rival, look on such,
Save but with pity and disgust,
Because, because I loved so much—
Because, because I love you still.
You women lead because you will,
Men follow you because they must ;
Because they love as lovers when
Sierra States were born of men ;
When giants knew the land and came
With nerves of steel and souls of flame—
Could you not wait within your Gate,
As their loves dared to wait and wait ? ”

XVIII

Her head sank lower still ; her hair,
Her heavy hair, great bars of gold,
Hung loosened, heedless, fold on fold,
As if she knew not, could not care ;
She tried to speak but nothing said ;
She could but press her aching heart,
Step back a pace and shudder, start,
The while she slowly moved her head,
As if to say, but nothing said.

XIX

His tongue was sudden loose with rage,
He strode before her, forth and back,
A lion strident in his cage,
Hard bound within his narrow track.
“ My father, yours, each Argonaut
An Alexander, to this sea
Came forth and conquered mightily.
An hundred thousand Didoes sat

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

Atlantic's sea-bank nor forgot,
But patient sat as Dido when
She waved her Eneas back again.
Yet you, you cannot, will not wait
My coming back through yonder Gate !

XX

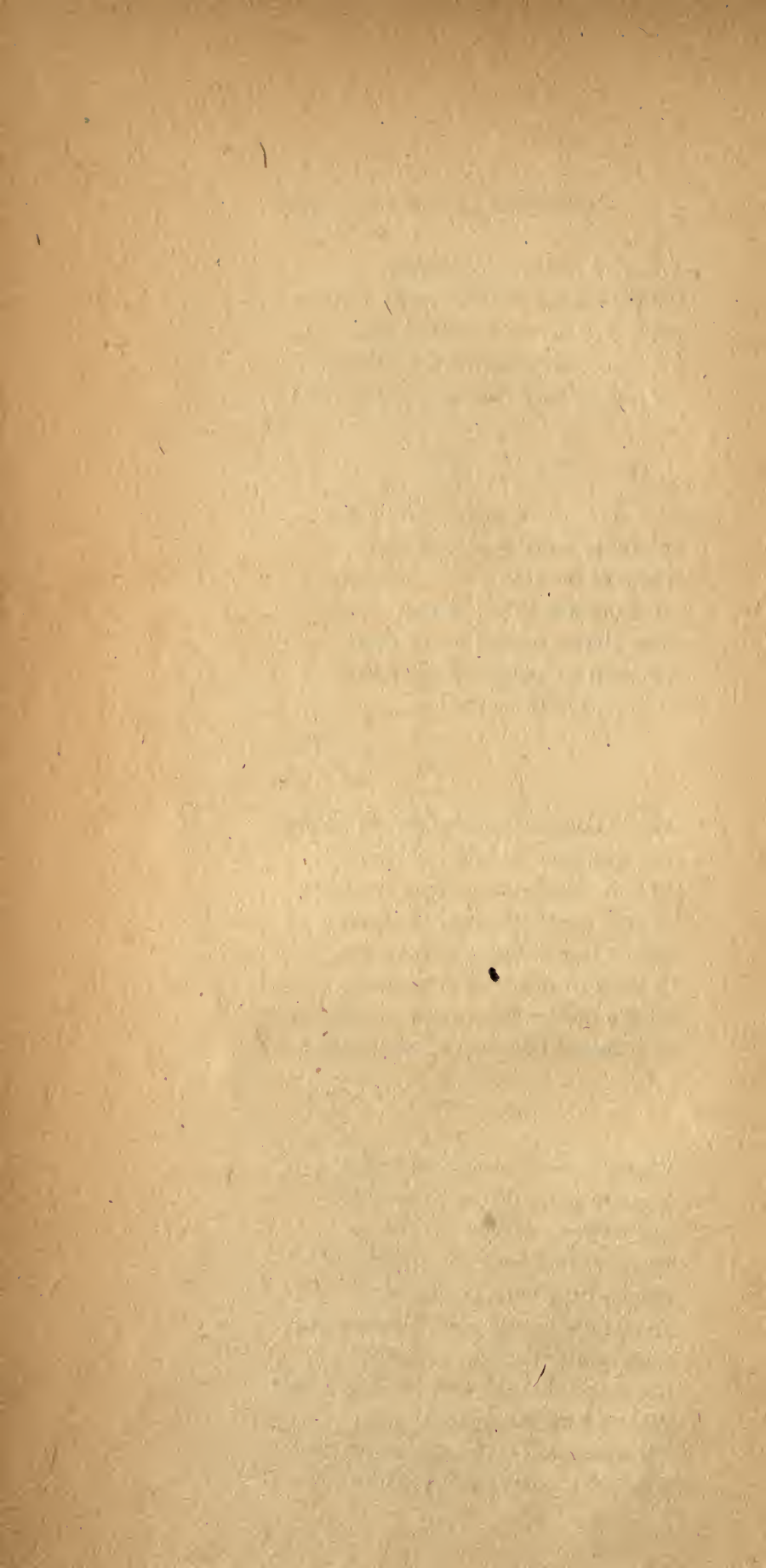
“ Hear me ! All Europe, rind to core
Is rotting, crumbling, base to top.
Withhold the gold and silver prop
Our dauntless fathers hewed of yore
From yonder seamed Sierra's core
And such a toppling you may hear
As never fell on mortal ear.

XXI

“ What's London town but sorrow's town
And sins, such as I dare not name ?
Such thousands creeping up and down
Its dirty streets in draggled shame !
What's London but a market pen —
Its hundred thousand hungry men ?
What's London but a town of stone,
Its thousand thousand women prone ?

XXII

“ What's Paris but a painted screen,
A gaudy gauze that scant conceals
The sensuous nakedness between
The folds that but the more reveals ?
What's Paris but a circus, fair,
To tempt this west world's open purse
With tawdry trinkets, toys bizarre ?
Ah, would that she were nothing worse !
What's Paris but a piteous mart
For west world mothers crazed to trade
Some silly, novel-reading maid



AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

For thread-bare, out-at-elbow rank —
To outworn, weak degenerate,
Whose bank is but the faro bank ;
Whose grave, his only real estate ;
Whose boast, whose only stock in trade —
A duel and a ruined maid.

XXIII

“ What’s Berlin, Dresden, sorry Rome,
But traps that take you unaware ?
Behold those paintings, right at home,
Where nature paints with patient care
Such splendid pictures, sea and shore,
As all the world should bow before :
Such pictures hanging to the skies
Against the walls of Paradise,
From base to bastion, as should wake
Piave’s painter from the dust :
Such walls of color crowned in snow,
Such steeps, such deeps, profoundly vast,
As old-time Art had died to know,
And knowing, died content, as he
Who looked from Nimo’s steep to see,
Just once, the Promised Land, and passed !
And yet, for all yon scene, this sea,
You will not bide, Penelope ?

XXIV

“ Then go, since you so will it, go !
My way lies yonder, forth and far
Beneath yon gleaming northmost star,
O’er silent lands of trackless snow.
Lo, there leads duty, hope, as when
This westmost world demanded men ;
Such men as led the firing line
When blood ran free as festal wine ;
Such men as when, fast side by side,
Our fathers fought and fighting died.

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

XXV

“ But go — Good bye ! Go see again
The noisy circus, since you must ;
Its painted women that disgust,
Its nauseating monkey men ;
But mark you, Miriam, the moth
That loves that luring, passing light —
Nay, hear ! I am not wilful, wroth ;
I love with such exceeding might,
My Miriam, my all, my life,
I would not, could not take to wife
My lily tainted by the touch,
The breath, the willing sight of such.

XXVI

“ Shall I see leprous apes lean o'er
My rose, touch, breathe it if they may
With breath that is a very stench,
The while they bow and bend before,
Familiar, as with some weak wench,
And smirk in double-meaning French ?

XXVII

“ You shrink back angered ? Well, adieu !
What, not a hand ? What, not a touch ?
My crime is that I love too much,
My crime is that I love too true,
Love you, love you, not part of you —
Yea, how much less the rose that droops
In fevered halls where folly stoops !

XXVIII

“ Yon splendid, tripple, midnight star
Is mine, I follow fast and sure,
Because it guides so far, so far
From fevered follies that allure
Your soul, your splendid, spotless soul,
To wreck where syren billows roll —
Good night ! What, turn aside your face
That I might never see again



AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

Its lifted glory and proud grace,
As some brave beacon light to men ? —
Ha, ha ! Let's laugh lest one may weep —
How steep your hill seems, steeps how steep !
How deep down seems the silent town,
How lone, how dark, how distant down !
The moon, too, turns her face, her light,
As you have turned your face tonight,
As you have turned your face from me,
My heartless, lost Penelope."

XXIX

She heard and yet she did not hear ;
All seemed as some mad, midnight dream,
A far sea sound was in her ear ;
Her eyes seemed hurt as by a beam
Of light that fell too bright to last
And left her blinded as it passed.

XXX

Then sudden up she tossed her head.
She strode her porch and striding said :
" Penelope ! To wait and weave !
Penelope ! To wait and wait
As waits a dog within his gate,
To weave and unweave, grieve and grieve,
As some weak harem favorite
Tight fenced from love and life and light !

XXXI

" Why, I should not have sat one day
To that dull thud and thudding loom,
With cowards crowding fast for room
To say what brave men dared not say !
Why, I had snatched down from the wall
His second sword that sad first day
And set its edge to end it all ! —
Had hewn that loom to splinters, yea,
Had slashed the warp, enmeshed the woof,
And called that dog and put to proof
Each silly suitor hounding me
Then hoisted sail and bent to sea ! "

XXXII

“ Penelope ! Penelope !
Of all fool tales in historie
I think this thing the foolishhest !
Why, I, the favored of that land,
Had such fools come to seek my hand,
Had ranged in line the sexless list
And frankly answered with my fist ! ”

XXXIII

She instant paused. Each helpless hand
Fell down, fell heavy down as lead ;
She tried but could not understand.
At last she raised once more her head,
Set firm her lips, stepped forth a pace,
Looked long his far star in the face,
Stood stately, still, as fixed as fate,
Till all the east flushed sudden red.
Then as she turned within she said,
Said sad as night, yet glad as day,
Said firm, yet soft as love could say,
With one last word across the gate :
“ I cannot and I will not wait.”

CANTO V.

I

His tripple star led on and on,
Led up blue-bastioned Chilkoot^c pass
To clouds, through clouds, above white clouds
That droop with snows like beaded strouds
Above a world of gleaming glass,
Where loomed such city of the skies
As only prophets look upon,
As only loving poets see,
With prophet ken of mystery.

II

What lone, white silence, left or right,
What whiteness, something more than white,
Such steel blue whiteness, van or rear —

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

Such silence as you could but hear
Above the sparkled, frosted rime,
As if the steely stars kept time.

III

What temples, towers, tombs of white,
White tombs, white tombstones, left and right,
That pushed the passing night aside
To ward where fallen stars had died —
To ward white tombs where dead stars lay —
White tombs more white, more bright than day;
White tombs high heaped white tombs upon,
White Ossa piled on Pelion.

IV

Pale, steel stars flashed, rose, fell again,
Then leaning sang a silent rune
As if all heaven was in tune
And earth had never heard of pain.
They passed, returned, paled, flashed again,
Then paused, leaned low, as pitying,
And leaning so began to sing,
The while they rocked, with mother care,
The new moon's silver rocking-chair.

V

Night here, mid-year, is as a span,
Thor came, as comes a king of war,
Came only as a hero can;
Thor stormed the battlements and Thor,
Far leaping, climbing high thereon,
Threw battle hammer forth and back
Until the wall blazed in his track
With sparks and it was sudden dawn —
Dawn sudden sparkled as a gem,
A jeweled, frost-set diadem
Of diamond, ruby, radium.

VI

Two tallest, ice-tipt peaks took flame,
Took yellow flame, then flush, then pink,

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

Then, ere you yet had time to think,
Took hues that never yet had name.
Then turret, minaret and tower,
As if to mark some mystic hour
Or ancient lost Masonic sign,
Took on a darkness like to night,
Deep night below that yellow light
That erstwhile seemed some snow-white tomb,
Then all was set in gray and gloom,
As some dim, lighted, storied shrine —
As if the stars forgot to stay
At court when came the kingly day.

VII

And now the high-built shafts of brass,
Gate posts that guard the tomb-set pass
Put off their crowns, rich robes and all
Their sudden, splendid light let fall ;
And tomb and minaret and tower
Again gleamed as that midnight hour,
While day, as scorning still to wait,
Dashed fiercely through the ice-locked gate
That guards the arctic, outer hem
Of white, high-built Jerusalem.

VIII

To see, to guess the great white throne,
Behold Alaska's ice-built steeps
Where everlasting silence keeps
And white death lives, and lords alone :
Go see God's river born full grown —
The gold of this stream it is good,
Here grows the Ark's white gopher wood —
A wide, white land, unnamed, unknown,
A land of mystery and moan.

IX

Tall, trim, slim gopher trees incline,
A leaning, laden, helpless copse,
And moan and creak and intertwine



AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

Their laden, twisted, tossing tops.
The melancholy moose looks down
In overcoat of mousy brown,
While far against the gleaming blue,
High up a rock-topt ridge of snow
Where scarce a dream would care to go
Climb countless monk-clad caribou
In silent line till lost to view.

X

The rent ice surges, grinds and roars,
Then gorges, backs and climbs the shore,
Then breaks with sudden rage and roar
And plunging leaps huge toppled stones
Swift down the seething, surging stream —
Mad hurdles of some monstrous dream.

XI

To see this river born full grown,
To see him burst the womb of earth
And leap, a giant at his birth,
Through shoreless whiteness with such shout,
Is as to know, no longer doubt,
Is as to know the great Unknown,
Aye, bow before the great white throne.

XII

White-hooded nuns, in gleaming white,
Kneel o'er his cradle, left and right,
On ice-heaved summits where no thing
Has yet set foot or flashed a wing ;
On ice-built summits where the white
Wide world is but a sea of white —
White kneeling nuns that kneel and feed
The new-born ice god in his greed
And feed, forever feed, man's soul.
The full grown river bounds right on
From out his birthplace tow'rd the Pole ;
He knows no limit, no control,

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

He scarce is here till he is gone,
This sudden, mad ice-born Yukon.

XIII

Beyond white plunging Chilkoot Pass,
That trackless Pass of stately tombs,
Of midday glories, midnight glooms,
Of morn's great gate posts, girt in brass —
This courtier, born to nature's court,
This comrade of white peaks still kept
Companion with his stars and leapt
And laughed, the gliding sea of glass
Beneath his feet in merry sport.
Then mute red men, the quick canoe
Then o'er the ice god's breast and on,
Till gleaming snows, and steepes were gone,
Till wide, deep waters, swirling blue,
Received the sudden, swift canoe,
That leapt and laughed and laughing flew.

XIV

Then tall, lean trees, girth scarce a span,
With moss-set, moss-hung banks of mold,
Most rich in hue, more gorgeous than
Silk carpetings of Turkistan :
Deep, yellow mosses, rich as gold,
More gorgeous than the eye of man
Hath seen save in this wonderland —
Then flashing, tumbling, headlong waves
Below white, ice-heaved, ice-built shores^d
The river swept a seam of white,
Where basalt bluffs made day like night,
And then they heard no sound, the oars
Were idle, still, as grassy graves.
And then the mad, tremendous moon
Spilt silver seas to plunge upon,
Possessed the land, a sea of white ;
That white moon rivalled the red dawn
And slew the very name of night



AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

And walked the grave of afternoon —
That vast, vehement, stark mad moon !

XV

Then wide, still waters, sedgy shore,
A lank, brown wolf, a hungry howl,
A lean and hungry midday moon :
And then again the red men's oar —
A wide-winged, mute, white Arctic owl,
A black, red-crested, screeching loon
That knew not night from middle noon,
Nor gold-robed sun from lean, lank moon —
That crazy, black, red-crested loon. °

XVI

Swift narrows now, and now and then
A broken boat with drowning men ;
Then wide, still marshes, dank as death,
Where conked the wild goose long and loud
With unabated, angry breath.
Black swallows twittered in a cloud
Above the broad mosquito marsh,
The wild goose conked, forlorn and harsh ;
Conked, fluttered, flew in warlike mood
Above his startled myriad brood.
The while the melancholy moose,
As mated to the conking goose,
Sank to his eyes, his great, sad eyes,
And watched boats pass in hushed surprise —
Watched broken barge and drowning men
Drift, swirl and plunge the gorge again.

XVII

Again that great white Arctic owl,
As pitying, it perched the bank
Where swirled a barge and swirling sank —
A drowned man swirling with white face
Low lifting from the swift whirlpool.
That distant, doleful, hilltop howl —
That screaming, crimson-crested fool !

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

And oh, that ghastly, death's head moon
That hung the cobalt tent of blue
And looked straight down to look you through —
That dead man swirling in his place,
The owl, the wolf, the human loon,
And oh, that death's head, hideous moon !

XVIII

And this the Yukon, night by night,
The yellow Yukon, day by day ;
A land of death, vast, voiceless, white,
A graveyard locked in icy clay,
A graveyard to the Judgment Day.

XIX

Again the swirling pool was gone,
Again the boat swept on, swept on,
That moon was as a thousand moons !
Two dead men swirled, one swept, one sank —
Two wolves, two owls, two yelling loons,
Three lank, black wolves along the bank
That watched the drowned men swirl or sink,
Three screeching loons along the brink —
That moon disputing with the dawn
That dared the yellow, mad Yukon !

XX

And why so like some lorn graveyard
Where only owls and loons may say
And life goes by the other way ?
Aye, why so hideous and so hard,
So deathly hard to look upon ?
Because this cold, white, wild Yukon,
Or gold-sown banks or sea-white waves,
Is but one land, one sea of graves !

XXI

Behold where bones hang either bank !
Great tusks of beasts before the flood
That floated here and floating sank —
' Mid ice-locked walls and moss-hung steep !

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

Lo, this is death-land ! Heap on heap,
The Yukon cleaves a graveyard strown —
Three thousand miles of tusk and bone,
All strown and sown just as they lay
That time the fearful deluge passed,
Safe locked in ices to the last,
Safe locked, as records laid away,
To wait the final Judgement Day.

XXII

He landed, pierced the icy earth,
He burned it to the very bone —
Burned and laid bare the deep bedstone
Placed at the building, at the birth
Of morn, and here, there, everywhere,
Such bones of bison, mastodon !
Such tusky monsters without name !
Great ice-bound bones with flesh scarce gone ;
So fresh the wild dogs nightly came
To fight about and feast upon.
And gold above the bedrock lay
So bounteous below the bones
Men barely need to turn the stones
To fill their skins within the day,
With rich red gold and go their way.

XXIII

“ The gold of that place it is good.”
Lo, here God laid the Paradise !
Lo, here each witness of the flood,
Tight jailed in ice eternal lies
To wait the bailiff's chorus call :
“ Come into court, come one, come all !”
But why so cold, so deathly cold
The battered beasts, the scattered gold,
The pleasant trees of Paradise,
Deep locked in everlasting ice ?

XXIV

Hear, hear the red man's simple tale :
He says that once, o'er hill and vale,

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

Ripe fruits hung ready all the year ;
That man knew neither frost or fear,
That bison wallowed to the eyes
In grass, that palm trees touched the skies
Where birds made music all day long.
That then a great chief shaped a spear,
Bone-tipt and sharp and long and strong,
And also made a moon-shaped bow ;
That then, exultant, crazed, he slew
Ten bison, ten great bear and, too,
A harmless, long-limbed, shambling moose ;
That then the smell of blood let loose
The passions of all men and all
Uprose and slew, or great or small —
Uprose and slew till hot midday,
All four-foot creatures in their way ;
Then proud, exulting, every one
Shook his red spear-point at the sun.

XXV

Then God said, through a mist of tears,
“ What would ye, men made red with blood ? ”
And then they shook their bone-tipt spears
And cried, “ The sun it is not good !
Too hot the sun, too long the day ;
Break off and throw the end away ! ”

XXVI

Then God, most angered instantly,
Drew down the day from out the sky
And brake the day across his knee
And hurled the fragments hot and high
And far down till they fell upon
The waters of the bronzed Yukon,
Nor spared the red men one dim ray
Of light to lead them on their way.

XXVII

And then the red men filled the lands
With wailing for just one faint ray



AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

Of light to guide them home, that they
Might wash once more their blood-red hands.
But God said, "Yonder, far away
Down yon Yukon, your broken day !
Go gather it from out the night !
That fitful, fearful Northern Light,
Is all that ye shall ever know
To guide which way you will to go.

XXVIII

"Ye shall not see my face again,
But ye shall see cold death instead,
This land hath sinned, this land is dead ;
Ye drenched your beauteous land in blood,
And now behold the wild, white rain
Shall fall until a drowning flood
Shall fill all things above, below,
And wash away the smell of blood
And weave a piteous shroud of snow,
In graveyard silence, ever so !"

XXIX

The red men say that then the rain
Drowned all the fires of the world,
Then drowned the fires of the moon ;
That then the sun came not again,
Save in the middle summer noon,
When hot, red lances they had hurled
Are hurled at them like fiery rain,
Till Yukon rages as a main.

XXX

With bated breath these skin-clad men
Tell why the big-nosed moose foreknew
The flood ; how, bandy-legged he flew
Far up high Saint Elias, how,
Down in the slope of his left horn,
The raven rested, night and morn ;
How in the hollow of his right,
The dove-hued moose-bird nestled low

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

Until they touched the utmost height ;
How dove and raven soon took flight
And winged them forth and far away ;
But how the moose did stay and stay,
His great, sad eyes all wet with tears,
And keep his steeps two thousand years.

XXXI

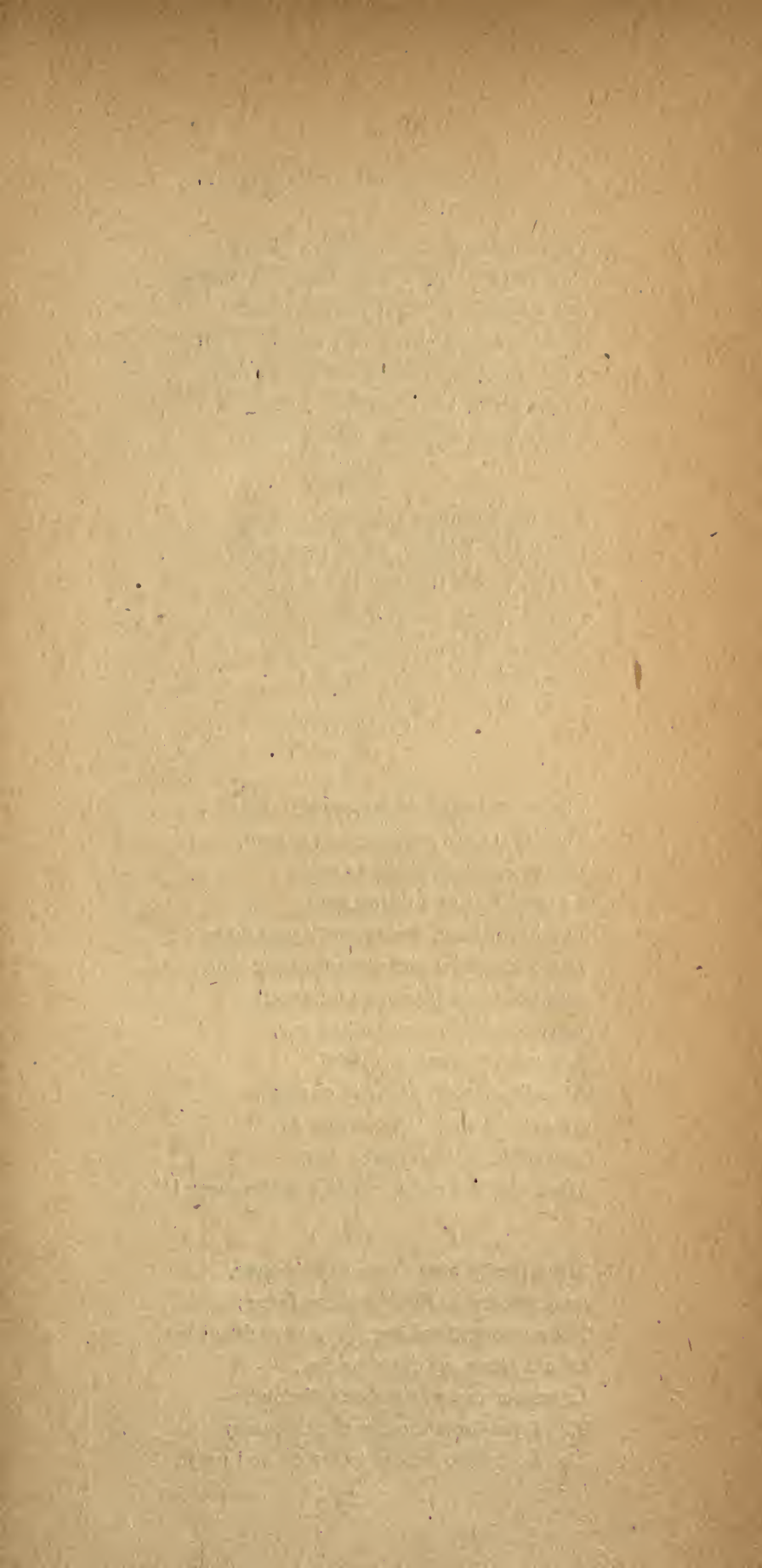
He heard the half nude red men say,
Close huddled to the flame at night,
How in the hollow of a palm
A woman and a water rat,
That dreadful, darkened, drowning day,
Crept close and nestled in their fright ;
And how a bear, tame as a lamb,
Came to them in the tree and sat
The long, long, drift-time to the sea,
The while the wooing water rat
Made love to her incessantly ;
How then the bear became a priest
And married them at last, how then
Of them was born the shortest, least
Of all the children of all men,
And yet most cunning and most brave
Of all who dare the bleak north wave.

XXXII

What tales of tropic fruit ! No tale
But of some soft, sweet, sensuous clime,
Of love and lovely maiden's trust —
Some peopled, pleasant, palm-hung vale
Of everlasting summer time —
And, too, the deadly sin of lust ;
Forbidden fruit, shame and disgust !

XXXIII

And whence the story of it all,
The palm land, love land and the fall ?
Was 't born of ages of desire
From such sad children of the snows



AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

For something fairer, better, higher ?
God knows, God knows, God only knows.
But I should say, hand laid to heart
And head made bare, as I should swear,
These piteous, sad-faced children there
Knew Eden, the expulsion, knew
The deluge, knew the deluge true !

XXXIV

And what though this be surely so ?
Just this : I know, as all men know,
As few before this surely knew —
Just this, and count it great or small,
The best of you or worst of you,
The Bible, lid to lid, is true !

CANTO VI.

I

The year waxed weary, gouty, old ;
The crisp days dwindled to a span,
The dying year it fell as cold
As dead feet of a dying man.
The hard, long, weary work was done,
The dark, deep pits probed to the bone,
And each had just one tale to tell.
Ten thousand miners all as one,
Agnostic, Christian, infidel,
All said, despite of creed or class,
All said as one, "As surely as
The Bible is, the deluge was,
What e'er the curse, what e'er the cause !"

II

What merry men these miners were,
And mighty in their pent-up force ;
They wrought for her, they thought of her,
Of her alone, or night or day,
In tent or camp, their one discourse —
The Love three thousand miles away,
The Love who waked to watch and pray.

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

III

Yet rude were they and brutal they,
Their love a blended love and lust,
Born of this modern, lustful day ;
You could but love them for their truth,
Their frankness and their fiery youth,
And yet turn from them in disgust,
To loathe, to pity and mistrust.

IV

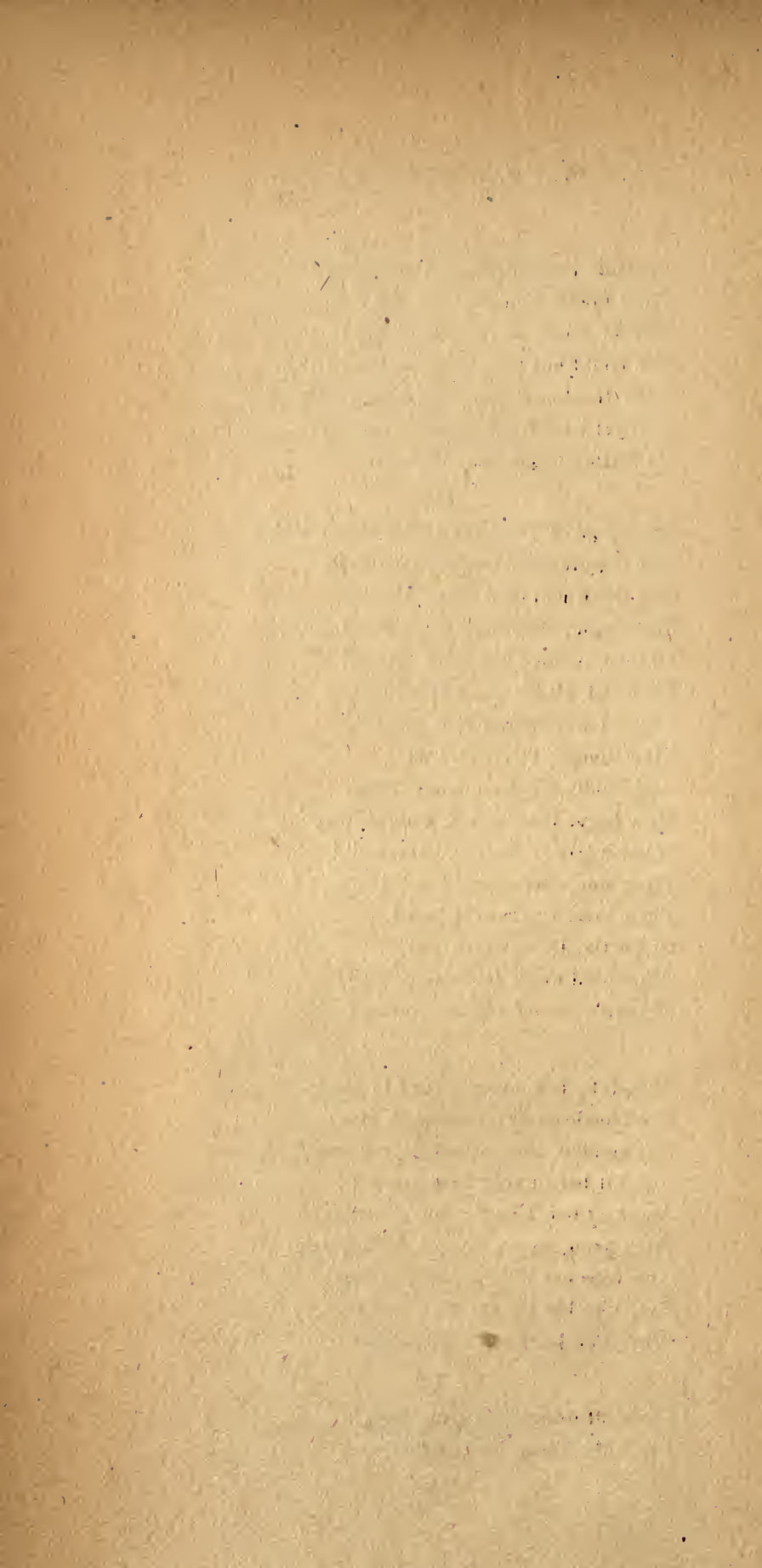
The Siege of Troy knew scarce such men ;
The cowards had not voyaged then,
The weak had died upon the way.
They sang, they sang some like to this,
Of love, as love has been, still is : —
“ I say risk all for one sweet kiss ;
I say ' t were better risk the fall,
Like Romeo, to venture all
And boldly climb to deadly bliss.
How brave that savage, Sabine way ;
What warriors, heroes, came of it !
Their songs are ringing to this day,
Their loves the love of Juliet,
Of Portia, Desdemona, yea,
All storied loves yet sung or writ,
Of man's strong arm or woman's wit.

V

“ Then take her, lover, sword in hand,
Hot-blooded and red-handed, clasp
Her sudden, stormy, where you stand,
And lift her in your iron grasp
And kiss her, kiss her till she cries
From keen, sweet, happy, killing pain.
Aye, kiss her till she seeming dies :
Aye, kiss her till she dies, and then,
Why, kiss her back to life again.

VI

“ I love all things that truly love,
I love the low-voiced turtle dove



AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

In wooing time, he woos so true ;
His soft notes fall so overfull
Of love they thrill me through and through ;
But when the thunder-throated bull
Upheaves his head and shakes the air
With eloquence and battle's blare
And roars and tears the earth to woo,
I like his warlike wooing too.

VII

" But best to love that lover is
Who loves all things beneath the sun
Then finds all fair things in just one,
And finds all fortune in one kiss.
How wisely born, how more than wise,
How wisely learned must be that soul
Who loves all earth, all Paradise,
All peoples, places, pole to pole,
Yet in one kiss includes the whole !

VIII

" Give me a lover ever bold,
A lover, strong, keen, sword in hand,
Like to those white-plumed knights of old
Whose loves held honor in the land ;
Those men with hot blood in their veins
And hot, swift, iron hand to kill —
Those women loving well the chains
That bound them fast against their will ;
Yet loved and lived — are living still."

IX

Enough : the bronzed man launched his boat,
A faithful Dwarf clutched at the oar,
And Boreas began to roar
As if to break his burly throat.
Down, down by basalt palisade,
Down, down by bleakest ice-piled isle !
The mute, dwarf water rat afraid ?
The water rat it could but smile

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

To hear the cold, wild waters roar
Against his savage, Arctic shore.

X

But now he listened, gave a shout,
A startled cry, akin to fear.
The hand of God had reached swift out
And locked, as in an iron vise,
The whole white world in blue, bright ice,
And daylight scarce seemed living more.
The day, the year, the world, lay dead,
With star-tipt candles foot and head ;
Great stars that burn a whole half year
Stood forth, five-horned, and near, so near !

XI

The ghost-white day scarce drew a breath,
The dying day shrank to a span ;
There was no life save that of man
And woolly dogs — man, dogs and death !
The sun, a mass of molten gold,
Rolled feebly up, then sudden rolled
Right back as in a beaten track
And left the white world to the moon
And five-horned stars of gleaming gold ;
Such stars as sang in icy rune,
And oh, the cold, such killing cold
As few have felt and none have told !

XII

And now he knew the sun's last light
Lay on yon ice-shaft, steep and far,
Where stood one bold, triumphant star,
And he would dare the gleaming height,
Would see the death-bed of the day,
Whatever fate might make of it.
A foolish thing, yet were it fit
That he who dared to love, to say,
To live, should look the last of light
Full in the face, then go his way

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

All silent into lasting night ;
As he had left her, on her height.

XIII

He climbed, he climbed, he neared at last
The Golden Fleece of flitting light !
When sudden as an eagle's flight —
An eagle frightened from its nest
That keeps the topmost, rock-reared crest —
It swooped, it drooped, it, dying, passed
As on some sunny, poppy day
The Mariposa gathers gold
Then careless brushes it away,
Like star-dust when the day is old,
So passed his light and all was night.
Some stars or scattered flecks of gold
Flashed from the far and fading wings
That kept the sky, like living things —
Then oh, the cold, the cruel cold !
The light, the life of him had passed,
The spirit of the day had fled ;
The lover of God's first-born, Light,
Descended, mourning for his dead.
The last of light, the very last
He deemed that he should look upon
Until God's everlasting dawn
Beyond this dread half-year of night
Had fled forever from his sight.

XIV

'Twas death to go, thrice death to stay,
Turn back, go southward, seek the sun ?
Yea, better die in search of light,
Die boldly, face set forth for day,
As many dauntless men have done,
Than wail at fate and house with night,
Slow waiting death in doleful plight.

XV

Some woolly dogs, a skin-clad chief —
His trained thews stood him now in stead —

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

Broad snow-shoes, then a laden sled. . .
That moon was as a brazen thief
That robs to revel and carouse !
It followed, followed everywhere ;
He hid his face, that moon was there.
Such painful light, such piteous pain !
It broke into his very brain,
As breaks a burglar in a house,
To rob and revel and carouse.

XVI

Scarce seen, a change came, slow, so slow !
The moon sank slowly to the right,
The lower world of gleaming white
Took on a somber band of woe,
A wall of umber 'round about,
So dim at first you could but doubt
That change there was day after day —
Nay, nay, not day, I can but say
Sleep after sleep, sleep after sleep —
That band grew darker, deep, more deep,
Until there girt a great dark wall,
A low, black wall of ebon hue,
Oppressive, deathlike as a pall ;
It walked with you, close compassed you,
While not one thread of light shot through.
Above the black a gird of brown
Soft blending into amber hue,
And then from out the cobalt blue
Great, massive, golden stars hung down
Like towered lights of mountain town.

XVII

And now the moon moved gaunt and slow,
Half veiled her hollow, hungry face
In amber, kept unsteady pace,
High up her star set wall of snow
Nor scarcely deigned to look below.

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

XVIII

Then far beyond, above the night,
Above the umber, amber hue,
Above the lean moon's blare and blight,
One mighty ice peak towered through.
One gleaming peak, as white, as lone
As one could think the great white throne,
Stood up against the cobalt blue
And kept companion with the stars,
Despite black walls or prison bars !

XIX

That wall, that hideous prison wall,
That blackness, umber, amber hue,
It follows you, encircles you,
It mantles as a hearse's pall,
Your eyes lift to the star-tipt sky,
You lift your frosted face, you pray
That e'en the sickly moon might stay
A time, if but to see you die.
Yet how it blinds you, body, soul !
You can no longer keep control,
Your feebled senses fall astray ;
You cannot think, you dare not say.

XX

And now such under gleam of light,
Such blazing, flaming, frightful glare ;
Some like a horrid, dread nightmare,
Such hideous light, born of such night !
It burst, with changeful interval,
From out the ice beneath the wall,
From out the groaning, surging stream
That breathed, or tried to breathe, in vain,
That struggled, strangled, shrieked with pain !
'Twas as if he of Patmos read,
Sat by with burning pen and said,
With piteous and pathetic voice,
" The earth shall pass with rustling noise."

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

XXI

Swift out the ice-crack, fiery red,
Swift up the umber wall and black,
Then 'round and 'round, up, down and back,
The sudden lightning sped and sped,
Until the walls hung burnished red,
An instant red, then yellow, white,
With something more than earthly light.

XXII

It binds your eyes until they burn,
Until you dare not look or turn,
But cry with him who saw and told
The story of, the glory of
The jasper walls, the streets of gold
Where trail God's unseen garments hem
The holy New Jerusalem.

XXIII

Then while he trudged he tried to think,
And then another new born light,
Or red or yellow, blue or white,
Burst up from out the very brink
Of where he passed and, left or right,
It burnished yet again the walls !
Then up, straight up against the stars
That seemed as jostled, rent with jars !
Then silent night. Where next and when ?
Then blank, black interval, and then —
And oh, those blank, dread intervals,
This writing on the umber walls !

XXIV

The burning Borealis passed,
The umber walls fell down at last
And left the great cathedral stars, '
The five-horned stars, blent, burnished bars.

XXV

The moon resumed all heaven now,
She shepherded the stars below

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

Along her wide, white steeps of snow,
Nor stooped nor rested, where or how.
She bared her full white breast, she dared
The sun e'er show his face again.
She seemed to know no change, she kept
Carousal constantly, nor slept,
Nor turned a breath, nor spared
The fearful meaning, the mad pain,
The weary eyes, the poor, dazed brain
That came at last to feel, to see
The dread, dead touch, of lunacy.

XXVI

How more than beautiful the shroud
Of dead Light in the moon-mad north
When great torch-tipping stars stand forth,
Five-horned, as marshalled for the fight
Against glad resurrecting Light !

XXVII

The moon blares as mad trumpets blare
To marshalled warriors long and loud :
The cobalt blue knows not a cloud,
But oh, beware that moon, beware
Her ghastly, graveyard, moon-mad stare !

XXVIII

Beware white silence more than white !
Beware the groaning stream below,
Beware the wide, white seam of snow,
Where trees hang white as hooded nun —
No thing not white, not one, not one.
All day, all day, all night, all night —
Nay, nay, not yet or day or night,
Just whiteness, whiteness, ghastly white
Made doubly white by that mad moon,
And sweet stars jangled out of tune !

XXIX

At last he saw, or seemed to see,
Above, beyond, another world.

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

Far up the icy path there curled
A red-veined cloud, a canopy
That topped the fearful, ice-built peak
That seemed to prop the very porch
Of God ; and then, as if a torch
Burned dim, there flashed a fiery streak,
A flush, a blush on heaven's cheek !

XXX

The dogs sat down, men sat the sled
And watched the flush, the blush of red.
The little woolly dogs they knew,
Yet scarce knew what they were about.
They thrust their noses up and out,
They drank the light, what else to do ?
Their little feet, so worn, so true,
Could scarce keep quiet for delight.
They knew, they knew, how much they knew,
The mighty breaking up of night !
Their bright eyes sparkled with such joy
That they at last should see the light !
The tandem sudden broke all rule,
Swung back, each leaping like a boy
Let loose from some dark, ugly school —
Leapt up and tried to lick his hand,
And stand as happy children stand.

XXXI

How suddenly God's finger set
A crimson flower on that height
Above the battered walls of night !
A little space it flourished yet,
And then His angel, His first-born,
Burst through the bars, as primal morn !

XXXII

His right hand held a sword of flame,
His left hand javelins of light,



AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

And swift down, down, right down he came !
His red wings wide as the wide sky,
And right and left, and hip and thigh,
He smote the marshalled hosts of night
With all his majesty and might.

XXXIII

The scared moon paled and she forgot
Her force and place and turned to fly ;
The ice-heaved palisades, the high
Heaved peaks that propt God's house, the stars
That flamed above the prison bars,
As battle stars with fury frougt,
Were burned to ruin and were not.

XXXIV

Then glad earth shook her raiment wide,
As some proud woman satisfied,
Tiptoed, exultant, till her form,
A queen above some battle storm,
Blazed with the glory, the delight
Of battle with the hosts of night.
And night was broken, Light at last
Lay on the Yukon. Night had past.

CANTO VII.

I

The days grew longer, stronger, yet
The strong man grew then as a child.
Too hard the tension and too wild
The terror ; he could not forget.
And now at last when Light was, now
He could not see, nor lift his eyes,
Nor lift a hand in any wise.
It was as when a race is won

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

By some strong favorite athlete
Who sinks down dying at your feet.

II

The red chief drew him on and on
To his own lodge up white Yukon
And housed him kindly as his own,
Blind, broken, dazed, and so alone !
The low, round lodge was desolate,
And deathly cold by night, by day.
Poor, hungered children of the snows,
They heaped the fire as he froze,
Did all they could, yet what could they
But pity his most piteous fate,
And pitying, silent, stare and wait ?

III

His face was ever to the wall
Or buried in his skins ; the light —
He could not bear the light of day
Nor bear the heaped-up flame at night —
Not bear one touch of light at all.
There are no pains, no sharp death throes,
So dread as blindness of the snows.

IV

He thought of home, he thought of her,
Thought most of her, and pictured how
She walked in silent splendor where
Warm sea winds twined her heavy hair
In great Greek braids piled fold on fold
Or loosely blown, as poppy gold.

V

And then he thought of her afar
Mid follies, and his soul at war
With self, self will and iron fate
Grew as a blackened gulf of hate !
And then he prayed forgiveness, prayed
As one in sin and sore afraid.

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

VI

And praying so he dreamed, he dreamed
She sat there looking in his face,
Sat silent by in that dread place,
Sat still, sat weeping silently.
He saw her tears and yet he knew,
The blind man knew he could not see ;
And then he seemed to hear her tears,
To hear them steal her loose hair through
And gently fall, as falls the dew —
The still, small rain of summer morn,
That makes for harvest yellow corn.

VII

He raised his hand, he touched her hair ;
He did not start, he did not say ;
It seemed that she was surely there ;
He only questioned would she stay.
How glad he was ! Why, now, what care
For hunger, blindness, blinding pain,
Could he but touch her hair again ?

VIII

He heard her rise, give quick command
To patient, skin-clad, savage men
To heap the wood, come, go, and then
Go feed his woolly friends at hand,
To bring fresh stores, still heap fresh flame,
Then go, then come, as morning came.

IX

All seemed so real ! He dared not stir,
Lest he might break this dream of her.
How holy, holy sweet her voice,
Like benediction o'er the dead !
So glad he was, so grateful he,
In thanking God most fervently,
Forgot his plight, forgot his pain
And deep at heart did he rejoice ;
Yet prayed he might not wake again
To peril, blindness, piteous pain.

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

X

Then, as he hid his face, she came
And leaned quite near and took his hand.
'Twas cold 'twas very cold, 'twas thin
And bony, black, just skin and bone,
Just bone and wrinkled mummy-skin.
She held it out against the flame,
Then pressed it with her two warm hands.
It seemed as she could feel the sands
Of life slow sift to shadow land.
Close on his hurt eyes she laid hand,
The while she wearied, nodded, slept.
The flame burned low, the wind's wild moan
Awakened her. Cold as a stone
His starved form, shrunken to a shade,
Stretched in the darkness and, dismayed,
She put the skins back and she crept
Close down beside and softly laid
Her warm, strong form to his and slept,
The while her dusk men vigil kept.

XI

That long, long night, that needed rest !
Then flames at morn ; her precious store
Heaped hard by on the earthen floor
While mute, brown men, starved men, stood by
To wait the slightest breath or sigh
Or sign of wakening request —
What silence, patience, trust ! What rest !
Of all good things I say the best
Beneath the sun is sleep — and rest.

XII

She slowly wakened from her sleep
To find him conscious in her keep !
What food for all, what feast for all
To chief or slave, or great or small,
Around the flaming, glowing heap —
Such reach of limb, such rest, such rest,
Such appetite, such hungry zest !

XIII

Why, he had gone, had gladly gone
In quest of His eternal Light,
Beyond all dolours, that dread night,
Had she not reached her hand and drawn,
Hard drawn, him back and held him so,
Held him so hard he could not go.
And yet he lingered by the brink,
As dulled and dazed as you can think.
Long, long he lingered, helpless lay,
A babe, a broken pot of clay.

XIV

She made a broader couch, she sat
All day beside and held his hand
Lest he might sudden slip away.
And she all night beside him lay,
Lest the last grain of sinking sand
Might in the still night slip and pass,
With none at hand to turn the glass.

XV

And did the red men prate thereat ?
Why, they had laid them down and died
For her, these simple dusky sons
Of nature, children of the snows,
Born where the ice-bound river runs,
Born where the Arctic torrent flows.
Look you for evil ? Look for ill
Or good, you find just what you will.

XVI

He spake no more than babe might speak ;
His eyes were as the kitty's eyes
That open slowly with surprise
Then close as if to sleep a week ;
But still he held, as if he knew,
The warm, strong hand, the healthful hand,
The dauntless, daring hand and true,
Nor, while he waked, would his unfold,

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

But held, as drowning man might hold
Who hopes no more of life or land,
But, as from habit, clutches hand.

XVII

Once, as she thought he surely slept,
She slowly drew herself aside,
He thrust his hand as terrified,
Caught back her hand, kissed it and wept.
Then she, too, wept, wept tears like rain,
The very first, warm, welcome tears,
Drew in her breath, put by her fears
And felt she had not dared in vain.
Yet day by day, hard on the brink
He hung with half averted head,
As silent, listless as the dead,
As sad to see as she could think.
Their low lodge hung the terraced steep
Above the wide, wild, groaning stream
That, like some monster in a dream,
Cried out in broken, breathless sleep;
And looking down, night after night,
She saw leap forth a sword of light.

XVIII

She guessed, she knew the flaming sword
That turned which way to watch and ward
And guard the wall and ever guard
The Tree of Life, as it is writ.
The hand, the hilt, she could not see,
Nor yet the true, life-giving tree,
Nor cherubim that cherished it,
But yet she saw the flaming sword,
As written in the Book, the Word.

XIX

She held his hand, he did not stir,
And as she nightly sat and sat
And silent gazed and guessed thereat.

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

His fancies seemed to come to her,
She could not see the Tree of Life,
How fair it grew or where it grew,
But this she knew and surely knew,
That gleaming sword meant holy strife
To keep and guard the Tree of Life.

XX

Oh, flaming sword, rest not nor rust !
The Tree of Life is hewn and torn,
The Tree of Life is bowed and worn,
The Tree of Life is in the dust.
Hew brute man down, hew branch and root,
Till he may spare the Tree of Life,
The pale, the piteous woman wife —
Till he shall know as know he must
Her name is not a name for lust.

XXI

She watched the wabbly moose at morn
Climb steeply up the further steep,
Huge, solitary and forlorn.
She saw him climb, turn, look and keep
Scared watch, this wild, ungainly beast,
This mateless, lost thing and the last
That roamed before and since the flood —
That climbed and climbed the topmost hill /
As if he heard the deluge still.

XXII

The sparse, brown children of the snow
Began to stir, as sap is stirred
In springtime by the song of bird,
And trudge by, wearily and slow,
Beneath their load of dappled skins
That weighed them down as weighty sins.

XXIII

And oft they paused, turned and looked back
Along their desolate white track,
With arched hand raised to shield their eyes —

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

Looked back as if for something lost
Or left behind, of precious cost,
Sad-eyed and silent, mutely wise,
As just expelled from Paradise.

XXIV

How sad their dark, fixed faces seemed,
As if of long-remembered sins !
They listless moved, as if they dreamed,
As if they knew not where to go
In all their wide, white world of snow.
She could but think upon the day
God made them garments from the skins
Of beasts, then turned and bade them go,
Go forth as willed they, to or fro.

XXV

Between the cloud-capped walls of snow,
A wide-winged raven, croaking low,
Passed and repassed, each weary day,
And would not rest, not go, not stay,
But ever, ever to and fro,
As when forth from the ark of old ;
And ever as he passed, each day
Let fall one note, so cold, so cold
It seemed to strike the ice below
And break in fragments hard as fate ;
It fell so cold and desolate.

XXVI

At last the sun hung hot and high,
Hung where that heartless moon had hung.
A dove-hued moose bird sudden sung
And had glad answering hard by ;
The icy steeps began to pour
Mad tumult down upon the deep.
The great Yukon began to roar,
As if with pain in broken sleep.
The breaking ice began to groan,
The very mountains seemed to moan,



AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

Then, bursting, like a cannon's boom,
The great stream broke its icy bands
And rushed and ran with outstretched hands
That laid hard hold the willow lands,
Rent wide the somber gopher gloom .
And roared for room, for room and room !

XXVII

The stalwart moose climbed hard his steep,
Climbed till he wallowed, brisket deep,
In soft'ning, sinking steeps of snow,
Then raging, turned to look below.
He tossed, shook his ungainly head,
Blew blast on blast through his huge nose,
Then, crazed with savage rage and fright,
He climbed, climbed to the highest height
As if he knew the flood once more
Had come to swallow sea and shore.

XXVIII

The waters sank, the man uprose,
A boat of skins, an Eskimo,
Then down from out the world of snow
They passed to seas of calm repose
Where wide sails waited, warm sea wind,
For mango isles and tamarind.

CANTO VIII.

I

They passed to soft Samoas^e seas
Where giants strode in naked strength,
Where long-limbed women loomed full length,
And loved beneath their tropic trees.
Hand still in hand, close side by side,
They sailed, they sailed which way they cared,
Nor questioned nor one wish denied,
Nor kept one sweetest scene unshared.
The while they sought and saw and knew
Just nature, beautiful and true :

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

And then the toy world, dwarf Japan —
The childish soul, the baby man.

II

Of all fair trees to look upon,
Of all trees pleasant to the sight
Give me the Poet's tree in white —
Pink cherry trees of blest Nippon
With lovers passing to and fro —
Pink cherry lanes of Tokio :
Ten thousand cherry trees and each
Hung white with Poet's plaint and speech.

III

Of all fair lands to look upon,
To feel, to breathe, at Orient dawn,
I count this baby land the best,
Because here all things rest and rest
And all men love all things most fair
And beautiful and rich and rare ;
And women are as cherry trees
With treasures laden, brown with bees.

IV

Of all loved lands to look upon
Give me this love land of Nippon,
Its bright, brave men, its maids at prayer,
Its peace, its carelessness of care.
A mobile sea of silver mist
Sweeps up for morn to mount upon ;
Then yellow, saffron, amethyst —
Such changeful hues has blessed Nippon !
See but this sunrise then forget
All scenes, all suns, all lands save one,
Just matin sun and vesper sun ;
This land of inland seas of light ;
This land that hardly recks of night.

V

The vesper sun of blest Nippon
Sinks crimson in the yellow sea ;



AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

The purple butterfly is gone,
The rainbow bird housed in his tree —
Hushed, as the last loved, trembling note
Still thrills its sweet, inspired throat —
Hushed as the harper's weary hand
Waits morn to waken and command.

VI

Fast homeward bound, brown, busy feet
In wooden shoon clang up the street ;
But not through all the thousand year
In Buddha's temple may you hear
One step, see hue of sun or sea,
Though wait you through eternity.

VII

Behold brown, kneeling penitents !
What perfumed place of silent prayer !
Burned santalum, sweet frankincense !
Pale, yellow priests pass here and there
And silent lisp with bended head
The Golden Rule on scrolls of gold
As gentle, ancient Buddhists read
These precepts sacred unto them
And watched the world grow old, so old,
Ere yet the Babe of Bethlehem.

VIII

How leaps the altar's forky flame !
How dreamful, dense, the sweet incense,
As pale priests burn, in Buddha's name,
Red-written sins of penitents —
Mute penitents with bended head
And unsaid sins writ deep in red.

IX

Now slow a priest with staff and scroll,
Barefoot, as mendicant and old —
You sudden start, you lift your head,
You hear and yet you do not hear,

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

A sound, a song, so sweet, so dear
It well might waken yonder dead.
His staff has touched the sacred bowl
Of copper, silver, shot with gold
And wrought so magic-like of old
That all sweet sounds, or east or west,
Sought this still hollow where to rest.

X

And you, you lean, lean low to hear ;
You doubt your ears, you doubt your eyes,
Your hand is lifted to your ear,
You fear, how cruelly you fear
The melody may die — it dies —
Dies as the swan dies, as the sun
Dies, bathed in dewy benison.

XI

It lives again ; you breathe again !
What cadences that speak, that stir,
Take form and presence, as of her
Whom first you loved, ere yet of men.
It utters essence as a sound ;
As Santalum sends from the ground
For devotee and worshipper
Where saints lie buried, balm and myrrh.

XII

But now so low, so faint, so low
You lean to hear yet hardly hear.
Again your hand is to your ear,
Your lips are parted, leaning so,
And now again you catch your breath !
Such breath as when you lie becalmed
At sea, and sudden start to feel
A cooling wave and quickened keel
And see your tall ship kiss the shore.
You hear, you more than hear, you feel,
As when the white wave shimmereth.
Your love is at your side once more,



AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

An essence of some song embalmed,
Long hidden in the house of death.

XIII

Now low, so low, so soft, so still,
As when a single leaf is stirred,
As when some doubtful matin bird
Dreams russet morning decks his hill —
Then nearer, clearer, lilts each note
And longer, stronger swells the wave —
Ten thousand dead have burst the grave,
An angel's song in every throat !
The forky flame turns and returns
To burn and burn red sins away ;
Such incense on the altar burns
As some may breathe but none may say,
Though cherished to their dying day.

XIV

And now the sandaled pilgrims fall
With faces to the jeweled floor —
The incense darkens as a pall,
As clouds that darken more and more.
You dare not lift your bended head —
The silence is as if the dead
Alone had passed the temple door.
And now the melody, the song !
So stronger now, so strong, so strong !

XV

The black smokes of the ashen urn
Where pale priests burn red sins away
Begin to stir, to start to turn,
As turns some evil thing abhorred —
To seek the huge bossed copper door —
An evil thing that dares not stay.
The while the rich notes roll and roar
To drive dread, burned sins out before
Calm Dia-Busta, the adored,
As cherubim with flaming sword.

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

XVI

And far, so far, such rich notes roll
That barefoot fishers far at sea
Fall prone and pray all silently
For wife and babes that wait the strand,
The tugging net clutched tight in hand,
The while they bow a space to pray ;
For every asking, eager soul
Knows well the time and patiently
It lists, an hundred leagues away.

XVII

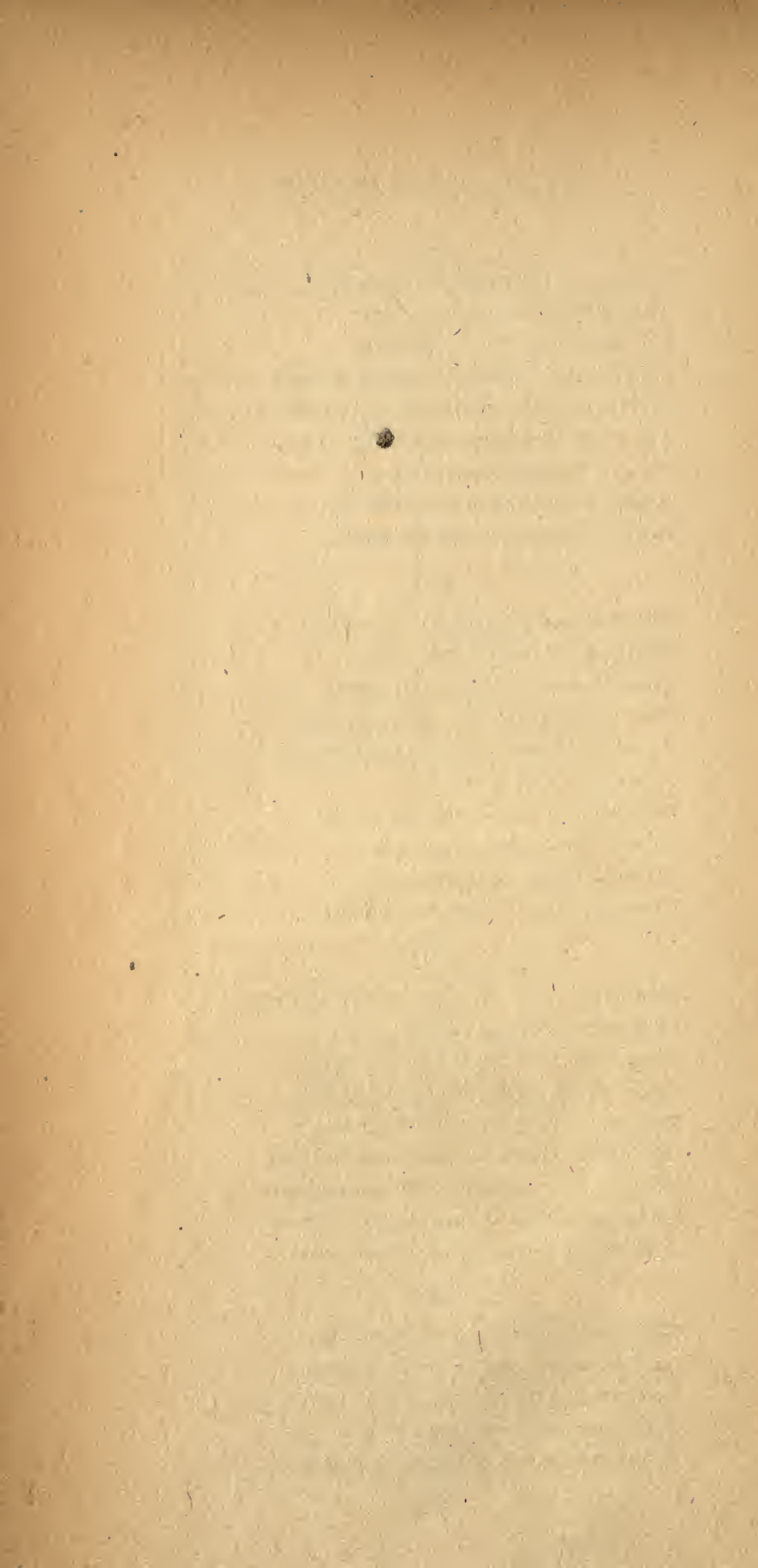
The thousand pilgrims girt in straw
That press Fujama's holy peak,
Prone, fasting, penitent and meek,
Hear notes as from the stars and pray
As we who know and keep the law —
As we who walk Jerusalem
With pilgrim step and pallid cheek :
How earnestly they silent pray
To do no thing, or night or day
They would not others do to them !

XVIII

And wee, brown wives on high, wild steeps
Of terraced plot and bamboo patch
Where toil, hard toil, incessant, keeps
Sweet virtue, sweet sleep and a thatch,
They hear and hold, with closer fold,
Their bare, brown babes against the cold.
They croon and croon, with soothing care,
To babes meshed in their mighty hair
And loving, crooning, breathe a prayer.

XIX

The great notes pass, pass on and on,
As light sweeps up the doors of dawn,
And now the strong notes are no more,
But feebler tones wail out and cry,
As sad things that have lost their way





AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

At night and dare not bide the day
But turn back to the shrine to die
And steal in softly through the door,
And gently fade along the floor.

XX

The barefoot priest scarce moves a hand,
Faint and more faint the last notes fall ;
You hear them now, then not at all,
And now the last note of the land
Wails out as when a baby cries
At night, and at the altar dies.
How sweet, how sad, how piteous sweet
This last note at the bowed monk's feet
That dies as dies some holy light —
A mist is rising to the eyes,
So loving sad, so tearful sweet,
This last, lost note, — Good night, good night !

CANTO IX.

I

They lay low-bosomed on the bay
Of Honolulu ;^h soft the breeze
And soft the dreamful light that lay
On Honolulu's sabbath seas —
The ghost of sunshine gone away,
Red roses on the grave of day.

II

Their dusky boatman set his face
From out the argent, opal sea
Tow'rd where his once proud, warlike race
Lay housed in everlasting dust.
He sang low-voiced, sad, silently,
In listless chorus with the tide,
Because his race was not, because
His sun-born race had dared, defied
The highest, holiest of all laws

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

And so fell stricken and so died —
Died stricken of dread leprosy
Begot of lust — prone in the dust —
Degenerating love to lust.

III

Sweet sandal-wood burned bow and stern
In colored, shapely crates of clay,
Sweet sandal-wood long laid away,
Long caverned with dead battle kings
Whose dim ghosts rise betimes and burn
The torch, and touch sweet taro strings —
Such giant, stalwart, stately kings !

IV

Sweet sandal-wood, long ages torn
From high-heaved, cloud-capped lava steep,
Then hidden where dead giants keep
Their sealed Walhalla, waiting morn —
Deep-hidden, till such sweet perfume
Betrayed their long-forgotten tomb.

V

The sea's perfume and incense lay
About, above, lay everywhere ;
The sea swung incense up the air —
The censer, Honolulu Bay —
And then the song, the soft, low rune,
So sad, as if dead kings kept tune.

VI

The moon hung twilight from each horn,
Soft, silken twilight — soft to touch
As baby lips — and over much
Like to the baby breath of morn.
Huge, five-horned stars swung left and right
O'er argent, opal, amber night.

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

VII

What changeful, dreamful, ardent light,
When Mauna Loa, far afield,
Uprose and shook his yellow shield
Below the battlements of night ;
Below the Southern Cross, o'er seas
That sang deep, silent symphonies !

VIII

Far lava peaks still lit the night,
Like holy candles foot and head,
That dimly burned above the dead,
Above the dead and buried Light.
There was such perfume of the sea,
Such Sabbath breath, soft, silently,
As when some burning censer swings,
As when some surpliced choir sings.

IX

He scarce had lived the whole long year,
But now yon mitred tongues of flame
That tipt the star-lit lava peak
Brought back such fervor to his cheek
He could but answer to his name.
He could but heed, he could but hear
That call across the lap of night
From tripple mitred tongues of Light,
That soulful, silent, perfumed night.
He said — and yet he said no word :
No word he said, yet all she heard,
So close their souls lay, white, so white,
That holy Honolulu night.

X

“Lies yonder Nemo's Mount, my sweet,
The Promised Land beyond, beyond
The grave of rest, the broken bond,
Where manly force must loose control,
Must press the grapes and fill the bowl,
Go 'round and 'round, rest, rise up, eat,
Tread grapes then wash the wearied feet ?”

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

XI

“ I know I have enough of bliss,
I know full well I should not dare
To ask a deeper joy than this,
This scene, your presence, this soft air,
This incense, this deep sense of rest
Where long-sought, sweet Arcadia lies,
Against these gates of Paradise.

XII

“ And yet, my own, I dare ask more.
Lone Adam had all Paradise
And yet how poor he was, how poor,
With all things his beneath the skies !
Aye, sweet, it were to roam or rest,
To ever rest or ever roam
As you might reckon best ;
But, Sweet, there comes a sense of home,
Of hearthstone, happy babes at play
And you and I — not far away.

XIII

“ Nay, do not turn aside your face —
‘ Be fruitful ye and multiply ’
Meant all ; it meant the human race,
And he or she shall surely die
Despised and rot to nothingness
Who does not love the little dress,
The heaven in the mother’s eyes,
His holy, secret, sweet surprise
The time she tells how truly blest,
With face laid blushing to his breast.

XIV

“ How flower-like the little frock —
The daffodil forerunning spring —
The doll-like shoes, socks, everything,
And each a secret, secret stored !
And yet each day the little hoard,
As careful merchants note their stock,

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

Is noted with such happy care
As only angel mothers share.

XV

“ At last to hear her rock and rock —
Behold her bowed Madonna face !
She lifts her baby from its place,
Pulls down the crumpled, dampened frock,
And never Cleopatra guessed
The queenliness, the joy, the pride
She knows with baby to her breast
And his chub fists churned either side !
The bravest breast faith ever bared
For brother, country, creed or friend,
However high the aim or end,
Was that brave breast a baby shared
With kicking, fat legs half unfrocked,
The while sweet mother rocked and rocked.”

XVI

As when first blossoms ken first bees,
As when the squirrel hoists high sail
And leaps his world of maple trees
And quirks his saucy, tossy tail ;
As when Vermont's tall sugar trees
First feel sweet sap then don their leaves
In haste — a million Mother Eves ;
As when strange winds stir sleeping ships
Long ice-bound fast in Arctic seas ;
So she, the strong, full woman now,
Felt new life thrilling breast and brow
And tingled to her finger tips.
Her limbs reached out, outstretched her head
As if to say — she nothing said.
But something of the tender light
That lit her girl face that first night,
The time she pulling poppies sat
The sod and saw the golden sheep
Safe housed within the hollowed deep
Was hers ; and how she blushed thereat !
Yet blushing so, still, silent, sat.

XVII

He paused ; the low, soft monotone
Of song, the half-dipt, heedless oar
Kept chorus, and, then as before,
For now he knew him not alone :
“ God’s pity for the breasts that bear
A little babe then banish it
To stranger hands, to alien care,
To live or die as chance sees fit.
Poor, helpless hands, reached anywhere,
As God gave them to reach and reach,
With only helplessness in each !
Poor little hands, pushed here, pushed there
And all night long for mother’s breast.
Poor restless hands that will not rest
And gather strength to reach out strong
To mother in the rosy morn !
Nay, nay, they gather scorn for scorn
And hate for hate the lorn night long —
Poor dying babe ! to reach about
In blackness, as a thing cast out !

XVIII

“ God’s pity for the thing of lust
That bears a frail babe to be thrust
Forth from her arms to alien thrall,
As shutting out the light of day,
As shutting off God’s very breath !
But thrice God’s pity, let us pray,
For her who bears no babe at all,
But gaily leads up Fashion’s Hall
And grinning leads the dance of death.
That sexless, steel-braced breast of bone
Is like to some assassin cell,
A whited sepulcher of stone,
A graveyard at the gates of hell,
A mart where motherhood is sold,
A house of murders manifold !

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

XIX

“Of all cursed things, thrice doubly cursed,
I count this painted thing the worst :
This barren, blighted, cursed fig tree,
This shameless, jeweled thing of shame
Who barter life for noisy name,
This unclean thing so more than she
Who trails the street in misery !

XX

“And who the best, who best of all
The famed four hundred, great or small —
Four hundred, thousand, million, aye,
Of all this broad, brave earth today ?
Why, such grand Gracchi Mother, she
Who knew not gem nor jewelry
Yet ranged her jewels at her side
With all a Roman Mother's pride,
And reckoned hers the richest home
On all the seven hills of Rome.

XXI

“I know the world is good, my love,
But weak, as man grown weak of mind,
And he who wishes well his kind
Will show respect unto its will,
And walk somewhat its way, will find
Some common ground, nor walk above,
Nor strangely turn and strangely talk,
But speak somewhat as others speak.
Man is not wicked, man is weak,
Is but as some poor tottling child
That cries out if not well beguiled —
Starts terrified at honest talk
And falls, ere yet it knows to walk.

XXII

“He who would save the world must stand
Hard by the world with steel mailed hand

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

And save by smiting hip and thigh.
The world needs truth, tall truth and grand,
And keen sword-cuts that thrust to kill.
The man who climbed the windy hill
To talk is talking, climbing still,
And would not help or hurt a fly.
The stoutest swimmer and most wise
Swims somewhat with the sweeping stream,
Yet leads, leads unseen as a dream.
The weak fool turns his back and flies,
The strong fool breasts the flood and dies.

XXIII

"I know you scorn the narrow deeds
Of men who make their god of creeds —
Yond men as narrow as the miles
That bank their rare acacia isles ;
But come, my Lone Star, come with me
To yon far church, high-built and fair,
For God is there, as everywhere,
Or Arctic snow or Argent sea ;
And if these learned men may not know,
For all their books and boast and show,
That here, right here, the womb of night
Gave us God's first-born, holy Light,
Why, pity, nor yet blame them quite :
Because they know not, cannot read,
Save as commanded by some creed.

XXIV

"What eons they may have to wait
Within their wall, without the gate,
Nor once dare lift their eyes to look
Beyond their blinding creed and book
We know not, but we surely know
Yon lava-lifted, star-tipt height
Is bannered still by that first Light.
We know this phosphorescent glow
At every dip of dripping oar
Is but lost bits of Light below



AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

The primal darkness rush and roar
Where moves God's spirit as of yore.
Aye, here, right here, from out the night,
God spake and sad : ' Let there be light.'

XXV

" And dare ask doubting, creed-made men
Why we so surely know and how ?
Why, here 'the waters,' now as then
Why here 'the waters,' then as now ?
We know because we read, yet read
So little that we much may heed.
We read : ' God's spirit moved upon
The waters ' ere that burst of dawn.
What waters ? Why, ' The Waters,' these,
These soundless, silent, sun-down seas.

XXVI

" The morning of the world was here,
' Twas here ' He made dry land appear,'
Here ' Darkness lay upon the deep.'
What deep ? This deep, the deepest deep
That ever rolled beneath the sun
When night and day they were as one
And dreamless day lay fast asleep
Rocked in this cradle of the deep.

XXVII

" Hear me ! How happy, long I laid
My body, soul, at your brave feet !
How long, how happy, Sweet, my Sweet,
Close at your side by death's cold door,
Or here where tropic passions pour :
And have you ever been betrayed ?
What hand, what finger have I laid
Against your garment's hem ? What word,
What sign have you yet seen or heard
That said you should not still remain
My Shrine, my Saint without a stain ?

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

XXVIII

“Hear me ! How pitiful the plea
Of men who plead for temperance,
Of men who know not one first sense
Of self-control, yet, fire-shod,
Storm forth and rage intemperately
At sins that are but as a breath,
Compared with their low lives of death !

XXIX

“And oh, for prophet's tongue or pen
To scourge, not only, and accuse
The childless mother, but such men
As know their wives but to abuse !
Give me the brave, child-loving Jew,
The full-sexed Jew of either sex,
Who loves, brings forth and nothing recks
Of care or cost, as Christians do —
Dulled souls who will not hear or see
How Christ once raised His lowly head
And, as rebuking, gently said,
The while he took them tenderly,
‘Let little children come to me.’

XXX

“Go forth among this homeless race,
This landless race that knows no place
Or name or nation quite its own,
And see their happy babes at play,
Palace or Ghetto, rich or poor
As thick as birds about your door
At morn some sunny Vermont May
Then think of Christ and these alone.
Yet we deride, we jeer, we gibe
To see their plenteous babes ; we say
‘Behold the Jew and all his tribe !’
Yet Solomon upon his throne
Was not more kingly crowned than they,
More surely born to lord, to lead,
To sow the land with Abram's seed ;



AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

Because their babes are healthful born
And welcomed as the welcome morn.

XXXI

“Hear me this prophecy and heed ;
Except we cleanse us kirk or creed,
Except we wash us word and deed
The Jew shall rule us, reign the Jew.
And just because the Jew is true,
Is true to nature, true to truth ;
Is clean, is chaste, as trustful Ruth
Who bore us David, Solomon —
The Babe, that far, first Christmas dawn.

XXXII

“You shrink, are angered at my speech ?
So be it then ; there lies the beach,
And up the beach the ways divide.
I would not leave the truth untold
To win the whole world to my side :
And yet, to win you for my bride
Would count down blood, as counting gold.
High yonder lifts the clear church light
For seamen, souls sea-tossed at night.

XXXIII

“I see the spiked Agave's plume,
The pepsin lane, acacia's blówn
Far up beyond tall cocoa trees
That gird the pretty, peaceful town.
That lane leads up, the church looks down —
There lie the ways, now which of these ?
Bear with me, I must dare be true.
The nation, aye, the Christian race,
Here fronts its Sibyl, face to face,
And I must say, say now to you,
Whate'er the cost, of fortune, fame,
The Christian is a thing of shame —
Must say because I know it true,
The better Christian is the Jew.

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

XXXIV

“ Behold the pale, wan, piteous wife
Of him who pleads his perfect life !
Her step is slow, she waits for death ;
How thin is she, how full is he !
Hear her wan baby’s hollow cry !
He scarce can cry above his breath.
Poor babe ! begotten but to die,
Or, harder fate, live feebly on,
The shame of mother, curse of state —
Half witted, worthless, jest of fate.

XXXV

“ Behold, God’s image, fashioned tall
As heaven stooping down to crawl
Upon his belly as a snake,
Ere yet his sense is well awake,
Ere yet his force has come, ere yet
The child-wife knows but to regret.
And lo ! the greatest is the least ;
For man lies lower than the beast.

XXXVI

“ Such pity that pure love should lie
Prone, strangled in its bed of shame
And no man dare to publish why !
Such pity, that in slain Love’s name
The weak bring forth the weaker, bring
The leper, idiot, anything
That lawless passion can beget !
Sweet pity, pity for them all —
The child that cries, child-wife that dies
Ere yet the soul has waked to see
The weaklings that may linger, yet
A feeble day to feebly fall —
As food for sword or cannon ball,
For prison wall or charity
Or fruit of gruesome gallows tree !



AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

XXXVII

“ But pity most poor man, blind man
Whose passions stoop him to a span.
Why, man, each well-born man, was born
To dwell in everlasting morn,
To top the mountain as a tower
A thousand years of pride and power,
To face the four winds with the face
Of youth until full length he lies —
Still God-like even as he dies.

XXXVIII

“ Could I but teach lorn man to live,
Could I but teach blind man to see,
But teach lost man to truly love,
And wisely, he would turn to me
And give great thanks, and ever give
Glad heed, as to some soft-voiced dove
That speaks as prophet from above.

XXXIX

“ The burning cities of the plain,
The high-built harlot, Babylon,
The bannered mur'ls of Rome undone,
That rose again and fell again
To ashes and to heaps of dust,
All died because man lived in vain ;
Because man sold his soul to lust,
Because man could not, would not love,
Live, stand erect and look above.

XL

“ And count what crimes have come of it !
I say all sins, or said or writ,
Lie gathered here in this dark pit
Of man's unbridled, mad desire,
Where her frail form is ruthless thrown,
As on some sacrificial stone,
And burned as in a living fire
To leave but ashes, rue and ire.

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

XL I

“ Aye, even crimes as yet unnamed
Are born of man's unbridled lust.
The wildest beast man ever tamed,
Or ever yet has learned to know,
The vilest beast would know disgust
Could it but know how low, how low
God's image sinks in muck and slime,
In crimes so deeper than all crime,
In slime that hath not yet a name,
And yet man knows no whit of shame !

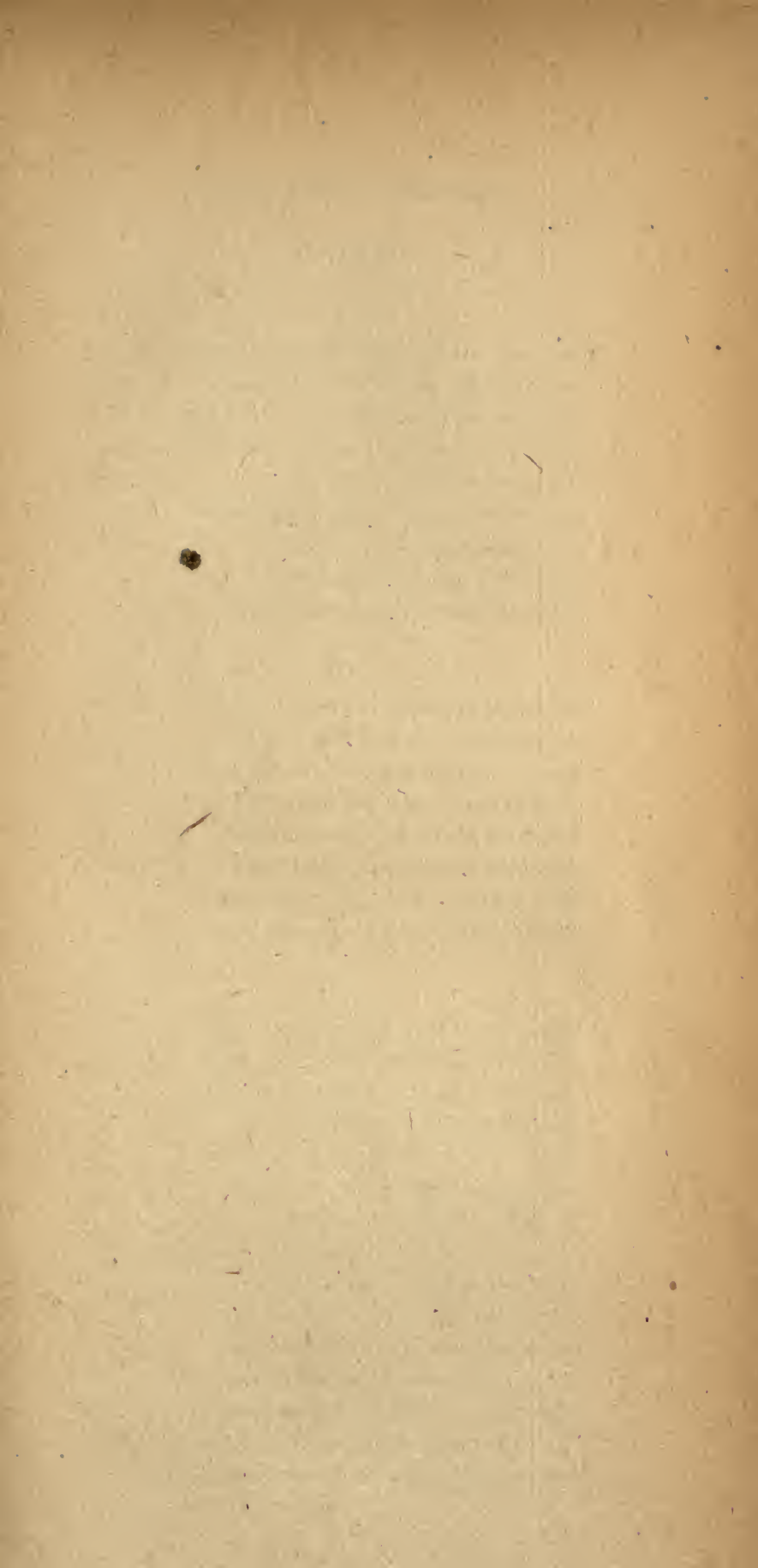
XL II

“ Poor, weak, mad man, so halt, so blind !
Poor, weak, mad man that must carouse
And prostitute what he should house
And husband for his coming kind !
Behold the dumb beasts at glad morn,
Clean beasts that hold them well in hand !
How nobler thus to lord the land,
How nobler thus to love your race,
To house its health and strength and grace,
Than rob the races yet unborn
And build new Babylons to scorn !

XL III

“ I say that each man has a right,
The right the beast has to be born
Full-flowered, beauteous, free and fair
As wide-winged bird that rides the air ;
Not as a babe that cries all night,
Cries, cries in darkness for such light
As man should give it at its birth.
I say the poor babe has a right,
The right, at least, of a wild beast—
Aye, red babe, black babe, west or east,
To rise at birth and lord the earth,
Strong-limbed, long-limbed and fair and free
As supple beast or tossing tree.





AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

CANTO X.

I

“Hear me, my Morning, May, my June —
My Midnight, Midday, Afternoon —
These truths I have from one who knew
The deeps of truth, from one who drew
My senses to his high control,
As tides turn to the high, white moon,
Because he was so pure so true,
So soulful, such unselfish soul,
With passions in one perfect whole.

II

“He loved, he wooed, he won, he wed,
And that was all, aye, that was all
For days, for months, maybe for years.
He still would woo, put by her fears,
Make her his friend, let what befall,
And bide her will and bridal bed ;
Bide her sweet will and loving, bide
Blest dalliance with his maiden bride.

III

“One night in May, such soulful night
Of cherry blossoms, birds, such birds
As burst with song, that sing outright
Because so glad they cannot keep
Their song, but sing out in their sleep !
Such noisy night, a cricket's night,
A night of Katydids, of dogs
That bayed and bayed the vast, full moon
In chorus with the tuneful frogs —
With May's head laid in lap of June.
How hot, how sultry hot the room !
Their garden tree in perfect bloom /
Gave out far Nippon's full perfume —
The night grew warm and very warm,
And warm her warm, full-bosomed form !

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

IV

How vital, virile, strong with life,
The world without, the maiden wife
How wondrous fair, full at his side
And ever still a maiden bride !
The man uprose, caught close a skin,
A lion's skin, threw this about
His great, Herculean, pent-up form,
Thrust feet into his slippered shoes,
Then, with a careless, loosened gown
He strode the wide room up and down,
The skin's claws flapping at his thews.
He turned, he caught her suddenly
And instant wrapped her close within ;
Then down the stairs and back and out
Beneath a blossomed apple tree ;
Beneath the tree he pressed her form,
He was so warm, so very warm,
He held her close as close could be
Beneath the blossomed apple tree.

V

“ He held her in his strong right arm,
Held her so hard he shook the tree
Because he trembled mightily
And shook in his hard, happy pain —
Because he quivered as a pine
When tropic storm sweeps up the line,
As when some swift horse, harnessed low,
Frets hard and bites the bit to go.
She laughed such low, sweet laugh, and said,
The while she raised her pretty head,
‘ Please, please be gentle, good to me,
And please don't hurt the apple tree.’

VI

“ The warm land lay as in a swoon,
Full length, the happy lap of June —
A fair bride fainting with delight
And fond forgetfulness with night.





AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

How warm the world was and how wise
The world is in its love of life,
Its hate of harshness, hate of strife,
Its love of Eden, peace that lies
In love-set, leaf-sown Paradise :

VII

“ How generous, how good is night !
How warm this garden was, how warm
With life, with love, in any form !
Two lowly crickets, clad in black,
Came shyly forth, shrank sudden back —
Then chirped in chorus, side by side ;
And oh, their narrow world was wide
As oceans, light their hearts as air,
And oh, their little world was fair,
And oh, their little world was warm
Because each had a lover there,
Because they loved and didn't care.

VIII

“ How languid all things with delight,
With sensuous longings, sweet desire
That burned as with immortal fire,
Immortal love that burns to live
And lives to burn, to take, to give,
Create, bring forth, and loving share
With God the fruitage, flesh or flower —
Just loving, loving, bud or bower,
Or bee or birdling, small or great,
Just loving, loving to create,
With just one caution, just one care :
That all creation shall be fair.

IX

“ The very garden wall was warm
With happy sunshine gone away ;
Each vine, with eager, reaching arm,
Clung amorous, tiptoed to kiss,
With eager lips, the ardent clay

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

That held her to its breast of bliss.
White apple blossoms, basking lay,
A perfect pathway of perfume ;
The tiger lily scarce had room
For lilacs bending in a storm
Of laden sweetness more than sweet.
The moon leaned o'er the garden wall
Then smiling tiptoed up her way
The while she let one moon beam fall
Love-laden in the sensuous heat.
So sweet, so warm, so still withall,
Love heard pink apple blossoms fall.

X

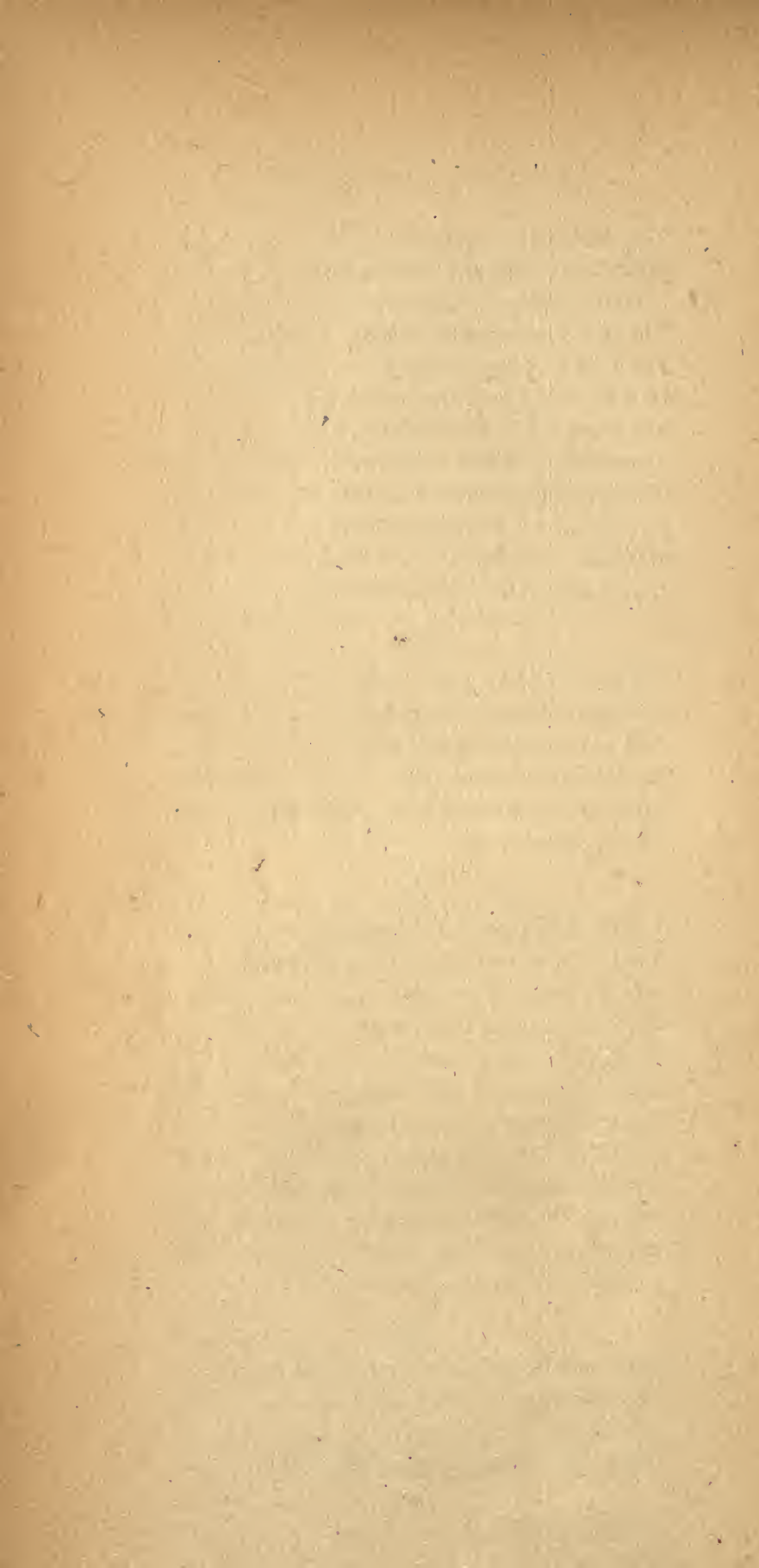
" A Katydid laid his green thigh
Against another leaf-green form
And so began to sing and sigh,
As if it were his time to die
From stress and strain of passion's storm —
He, too, was warm and very warm.

XI

" A tasseled hammock, rich and red,
Swung, hung hard by, and foot and head,
A maple tree, a cherry tree.
This famed tree of the Japanese,
Whatever other trees may be,
Is held most sacred of all trees ;
Not quite because of its perfume,
Not all because of its rich bloom,
But most because its blossomed boughs
Not only list to lover's vows
But true to lovers, ever true,
Refuse to let one moonbeam through.

XII

" Here, close beneath this Nippon tree,
The sweetest tree of fair Japan,
The lover's tree of mystery,
Where not a thread of moonlight lay,



AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

While waves of moonlight laughed and played
At hide and seek the other way,
He threw her, full length, from his arm ;
Full length, then raised her drooping head,
Threw back the skin and, blushing red,
He sought to say — He nothing said !
He nothing did but blush and blush
And feel his hot blood rush and rush —
The very hammock bed was warm —
The while he leaned low from his place
And felt her warm breath in his face.

XIII

“ Then, all abashed, he trembled so
He clutched the hammock hard and fast,
He held so hard it came, at last,
To shake, to swing fast to and fro.
Such awkwardness ! He clutched, let go,
Then clutched so hard he shook the tree
Till perfumed silence came to see —
Till fragrance fell upon her hair,
Her midnight hair, a storm of snow.
How fair, how fair, how sensuous fair,
Half hidden in a great snow storm :
And yet how warm, how more than warm !

XIV

“ How shamed he was ! His great heart beat
As beats some signal for retreat.
This stupid, bravest of brave men,
Confused, dismayed, hung down his head,
Then turned and helplessly had fled,
Had she not reached a timid hand
And, half as pleading, half command
And half way laughing, shyly said,
From out her snood of snow and rain,
‘ Please shake the Nippon tree again ! ’

XV

“ He shook the tree ; a snowy shower
On laughing face and loosened hair —

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

A flash of perfume and of flower —
Oh, she was fair and very fair !
Then with a sudden strength he plucked
His red-ripe cherry from the tree,
Wound 'round the skin and loosely tucked
The folds about her modestly,
Then on and up with giant stride
He bore his blushing, maiden bride,
So cherry ripe, so cherry red,
And laid her in her bridal bed —
Laid perfumed bride, laid flesh and flower.
What snows strewn in her ample hair,
What low, light laughter everywhere,
Or cherry tree, or step or stair !
Just low, soft laughter, cherry bloom,
Just love and love's unnamed perfume.

XVI

“ He tossed the lion's skin aside,
With folded arms leaned o'er his bride,
Turned low the lamp, then stood full length,
Then strode in all his supple strength
The room a time, tossed back his hair,
Then to his bride, swift bent to her,
And kneeled as lowliest worshipper.

XVII

“ And then he threw him by her side,
His long, strong limbs thrown out full length,
His two fists full of housed-up strength.
What pride, what manly, kingly pride
That he had conquered, bravely slain
His baser self, was self again !

XVIII

“ He held a hand, exceeding small,
He breathed her perfume, thrend her hair
Across her breast with such sweet care
He scarce did touch her form at all.
Again he rose, strode to and fro,
Came back and turned the light quite low.

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

XIX

“ He bowed his face low to her feet ;
Now he would rise, then would not rise ;
He breathed, blushed to his very eyes,
Then sudden pushed aside the sheet
And kissed her pink and pearly toes.
Their perfume was the perfect rose
When perfect summer, passion, heat,
Points both hands of the clock straight up,
As when we lift and drain the cup,
As when we lift two hands and pray,
When we have lived our little day,
The horologe of life may stop
With both hands pointing to the top.

XX

“ Then suddenly, in strength and pride,
Full length he threw him at her side
And caught again her baby hand,
A bird that had escaped his snare.
He caught it hard, he held it there,
He begged her pardon, begged and prayed
She would forgive him, then he laid
His face to her face and the land
Was like to fairy land. They lay
As children when outworn at play.
As children bounding from their bed,
So rested, radiant, satisfied
With self and selfishness denied,
They laughed with early morn, they led,
So full of soul, of strength were they,
The laughing dance of life all day.

XXI

“ All day ? A month of days, and each
A song, a sermon, but to teach,
A holy book to teach the truth
Of endless, laughing, joyous youth.

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

XXII

“ At last, one springtime morning, she
Held close his hand without the door,
Would scarce let go, said o’er and o’er,
‘ Good bye ! Come early back to me.’
And then, close up beside, as one
Might eager seek some stout oak tree
When storm was sudden threatened, she
Put up her pretty, pouting mouth,
Half closed her laughing, saucy eyes—
Such lips ! Such roses from the south,
The warm, south side of Paradise !—
He kissed her, kissed her crimson red,
Then, like some burglar, turned and fled.

XXIII

“ ‘ Good bye ! Come early back to me.’
Why, he heard nothing else all day,
Saw nothing else, knew naught but this,
Their fond, fond, first full-flowered kiss,
Wherein she led the rosy way,
As is her right, as it should be.
He looked the clock hard in its face
A hundred times, he blushed, he smiled,
Did leave his desk and lightly pace
The floor, half laughing, as a child.
A million kisses ! He’d had one,
Scarce one, his joy had just begun !

XXIV

“ ‘ Come early !’ He was at the gate
And through the door ere yet the day
Had kneeled down in the west to pray
Its vesper prayer, all brimming o’er
And blushing that he could not wait
To kiss her just once more, once more !
Take breath, then kiss her o’er and o’er.

XXV

“ By some sweet chance he found her there,
Close fenced against the winding stair,

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

With no escape, behind, before.
She put her lips up as to plead
She might be spared a little space ;
But there was mischief in her face,
A world of frolic and of fun,
And he could run as he could read,
Aye, he could read as he could run.
And then she pushed her red lips out :
' You are so strong you hold so fast !
You know I tried to lock the door ' —
And then she frowned, began to pout
And sighed, ' Dear, dear, 't is not well done !'
And then he caught her close, and then
He kissed her, once, twice, thrice again !

XXVI

" Then days and many days of this —
Ah ! man, make merry and carouse
Upon your way, within your house,
Hold right there in your manly hand
Your snow-white maid who waits your kiss ;
Carouse on kisses and carouse
In soul, the livelong, busy day
When duty tears you well away,
To know what waits you at the gate,
And waiting loves and loves to wait.

XXVII

" And how to kiss ? A thousand ways,
And each way new and each way true,
And each way true and each way new
Each day for thrice a thousand days.
How loyal he who loves, how grand !
He does not tell her overmuch,
He does not sigh or seek to touch
Her garment's hem or lily hand ;
She is his soul, his life, his light,
His saint by day, his shrine by night.

XXVIII

“ True love leads home his maiden bride
Low-voiced and tender, soft and true ;
He leans to her to woo, to woo,
As if she still turned and denied —
No selfish touch, no sated kiss
To kill, and dig the grave of bliss.

XXIX

“ True love will hold his maiden bride
As nobles hold inheritance ;
He will not part with one small pence
Of her fair strength and stately pride,
But wait serenely at her side,
Supremely proud, full, satisfied.

XXX

“ Why, what a glorious thing to view !
Each morn a maiden at your side,
The one fair woman, maid and bride,
With all her sweetness waiting you !
How wise the miser, more than wise,
Who knows to count and keep such prize !

XXXI

“ How glad the coming home of him
Who knows a maiden waits and waits,
All pulsing, still, within his gates,
To kiss his goblet's golden brim ;
How joyous still to woo and woo,
To read the old new story through !

XXXII

“ Ah me, behold what heritage !
What light by which to walk, to live
This age when lights resplendent burn,
This glorious, shining, new-born age,
When love can bravely give and give
And get thrice ten-fold in return,
If man will only live and learn.





AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

XXXIII

“ My Soul, my Life, you taught me all
I know, taught me to love, to live,
You gave me all I now would give
To man, to turn him from his thrall —
To turn him from his selfish self,
Teach him to love and not to use,
To cherish, cherish, not abuse,
To count her precious, pure as dawn,
Aye, love her just to look upon,
As meanest miser loves his pelf,
Above all appetite and self.

* * * * *

XXXIV

“ And now soft colors through the house
Began to slowly bud and bloom ;
The wise, the fair, far-seeing spouse
Began to deck the bridal room ;
Began to build, as builds a bird,
When first footfalls of spring are heard.

XXXV

“ The warm-toned colors of the wall,
Then gorgeous, grass-like carpetings
Strown, sown with lily, pink and all
That nature in her season brings ;
Then curtains of the Orient,
Then silken couch, soft as a kiss,
Then music such as science lent
But rarely to such loves as this :
Mute music, where not hand of man
Or foot of man is seen or heard,
Such soft, sweet sound as only can
In happy blossom time be heard —
Be heard from happy, nested bird.

XXXVI

“ And now full twelve o'clock, the noon
Of faithful, trustful wedded love,
The two hands pointing straight above.

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING ,

Their noon was midnight and the moon
Came through the silken sheen and laid
A sword of silver at her side.
And peace, sweet perfect peace was hers
As when nor bird nor blossom stirs
And she was never more afraid ;
The moon surrendered to the maid,
Drew back and softly turned aside
As bridesmaid turning from the bride.

XXXVII

“ All voiceless, noiseless, tenderly
He pressed beside her, took her hand —
He took her from the leaning moon,
And far beyond the amber sea,
While morning stars still sang in rune,
They sailed the seas of afternoon —
The far, still seas, so grandly grand,
Until they came to Babyland.

* * * * *

XXXVIII

“ And while the red stars sang in rune
Far down dim seas of afternoon,
Because of treasured strength and truth,
God trusted, kissed her tenderly
And loving took her soul to be
In partnership, to rear the youth,
The man-child mightily with Him —
Or cherubim or seraphim.”

* * * * *

XXXIX

He looked far up the mango lane
Below the wide-boughed banyan tree,
He looked to her, then looked again,
As one who tried yet could not see
But this one straight and upward way :
“ I said two ways, here seems but one,
Or set of moon or rise of sun,



AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

But one way to the perfect day,
And you will go, and I must stay ?”
She looked far up the steep of stone
And said : “ I go, but not alone.”

XL

The boat's prow pushed the cocoa shore,
The man spake not, but, leaning o'er,
Strong-armed, he drew her to his side
And was not anywise denied.
He pointed to the failing fire
That still tipt lava peak and spire,
While stars pinned down the robe of night :
' Twas here God said, “ Let there be Light !”

XLI

A little church, a lava wall,
A soft light looking gently down,
The Light of Christ, the second light,
Where two as one, passed up the town.
She gave her hand, she gave her all,
And said, as such proud woman might,
In ample right, in hallowed cause :
“ As it in the beginning was,
So let the man-child be full born
Of Love, of Light, the Light of Morn !”

SIT LUX.

NOTES

^a Nine people in ten, even in California where you find the widest traveled and best read people under the path of the sun, will tell you that the Golden Gate owes its name to the ingress and egress of the Argonauts.

The facts are the Bay of San Francisco was discovered and named by a party of priests making a journey of discovery from San Diego to the north.

And the Golden Gate was named and surveyed by a party of sun-bronzed overland explorers with the dust of three thousand miles' travel on their leathern habiliments, years before the discovery of gold.

John C. Fremont, in his book, "Memoirs of My Life," writes: "To this gate I gave the name of Chrysopylæ or Golden Gate, for the same reasons that the harbor of Byzantium (Constantinople) was named the Golden Horn (Chrysoceras)."

^b The California poppy, now the State Flower by act of the Legislature, was called The Cup of Gold or Holy Grail by the priests and Spanish explorers. Long years later, after the discovery of Alaska and her gold fields by a Danish navigator, Vitus Bering in the service of Russia (1745-9), a Russian Prince of culture, took the seed from Fort Ross, California, where Russia was then trying to get a foot-hold in order to grow cereals for her gold miners in Alaska and first exploited our poppy in the gardens of his Imperial master at Saint Petersburg. Hence the flower in botany now bears his name. It is a generous and prolific plant, and nearly a quarter of a century ago I was delighted to find it already getting a foothold on the hillsides and along the mountain byways of Italy and Southern France.

Mrs. Fremont says "The golden poppy is a poetical expression from Mother Earth in California, of the gold hidden in her bosom."

The golden poppy is God's gold,

The gold that lifts, nor weighs us down,

The gold that knows no miser's hold,

The gold that banks not in the town,

But singing, laughing, freely spills

Its hoard far up the happy hills;

Far up, far down, at every turn, —

What beggar has not gold to burn!

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

° Few indeed are the survivors of the Chilcoot terrors, but they are loyal and loving as veterans of the Civil War. Now and then a bent old man, with white flags of truce fluttering from his temples, climbs my steep and sits silently down and we repeat the lines:
And you, too, banged at the Chilcoot,
That rock-locked gate to the golden door!
These thunder-built steeps have words built to suit,
And whether you prayed or whether you swore
'T were one where it seemed that an oath was a
prayer—
Seemed God couldn't care,
Seemed God wasn't there!

And you, too, climbed to the Klondike
And talked, as a friend, to those five-horned stars!
With muckluck shoon and with talspike
You, too, bared head to the bars,
The heaven-built bars where morning is born,
And drank with maiden morn
From Klondike's golden horn!

And you, too, read by the North Lights
Such sermons as never men say!
You sat and sat with the midnights
That sit and that sit all day:
You heard the silence, you heard the room,
Heard the glory of God in the gloom
When the icebergs boom and boom!

Then come to my Sunland, my soldier,
Aye, come to my heart and to stay;
For better crusader or bolder
Bared never a breast to the fray.
And whether you prayed or whether you cursed
You dared the best and you dared the worst
That ever brave man durst.

^d*From my Journal, Aug. 6, 1897.*

Bravo! We are now through the great canyon of the upper Yukon and below the fearful White Horse Falls. Captain McCormick, in charge of the barge, has shot the canyon and the White Horse Falls of the upper Yukon this hour without loss or serious damage. The feat is the most remarkable thing that has taken place in the history of this country.

The White Horse Falls has been the terror of all travelers on this river. It has never been shot with cargo, crew and passengers before. It is a truly terrible place, magnificently terrible. It is called the slaughter pen. How many have perished here no one can say, as these cataracts rarely give up their dead.

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

This is one of the portages, and all boats have always stopped at the head of the canyon and falls to take out effects, leave all passengers and all the crew that can be spared or who do not care to take the chances, and then the boats are, as a rule, let down and guided by long, heavy cables.

But many times strangers have been drawn in here and made to take the shoot whether they would or not. It is stated on good authority that twenty-three men have perished here in these precipitous waters, all having been strangers and drawn into the canyon before knowing their peril. Of course there is no such danger if the boat is emptied and the usual care taken. But so great is the danger to strangers that the Canadian government has set up red flags all along either bank for more than a mile before reaching the canyon and falls, and just at the entrance to the "Slaughter Pen" is the peremptory order, "STOP!" We may all have to answer for what has been done, but the divine audacity and the glorious sensation of it is worth almost any sentence that can be imposed. And all brute courage, do you say? "Foolhardy excitement?" Pardon me, nothing of the sort. Never yet did men dare death for a higher purpose or a nobler cause. There are thousands on their way to the Klondike. There will be tens of thousands on their way in the spring. Are there supplies in the new mines? Will men suffer if not informed by this hasty and swift expedition? And will tens of thousands sacrifice their small fortunes to rush to a false field of discovery? We were sent out to see and to say. That is the situation. This is our reason for the boldest captain and the best crew and some devoted scribes taking their lives in their hands and rushing on and on and on. To have stopped and made the portage would have taken at least two days to carry over our cargo — time enough to lose or win a Waterloo.

Let me tell you of our wild dash right here on the banks of this regiment of wild and terrible white horses, for it is from their resemblance to a great band of plunging white battle steeds that the White Horse Falls take their name. The Canadian officer waited at the head of the canyon with another barge and hailed us as we passed, pointing out to the captain the point to land and unload, for the portage.

"I am going right through. They want me to go through, and I am going."

"What! What! You!—, and then I heard, as we flew on over the little white hills that were growing higher and bigger at each bound, the first real hard swearing I have met with in this expedition. Loud and long above the roar of the canyon and falls that dismayed officer called as he came running down to the foaming river and up the steep bluff that looks down into the foaming white canyon in its narrow, perpendicular basalt walls. And as he ran the miners, boatmen, other government officers and all ran after him, leaving their boats and their packs and stores and all to take care of themselves.

Men beckoned to us, but we could not hear their cries above the roar of the mad, wild waters. Boom! Bang! We were literally loaded into a cannon, shot in and down and out as though out of a gun into a very hell of waters, and then the shout that went up from the hill top with the tossing arms and waving hats! It was hearty, heartful, human. A wild, wild, Western shout from the strong Western men, yet a shout with tears in it.

But the regiment of unbridled white horses still plunged and leaped and charged in our narrow way. Ten thousand gleaming white horses—these must be ridden down in one desperate dash. There was no old guard to follow if our first brave charge failed. We must ride them down this instant or be ridden down. The special expedition, all the time quietly planning for this time-saving venture, had the day before forgotten to take down the American flag, although on British soil, and with all respect to the honest Britons. And never flew flag so gloriously—indeed sublimely beautiful. It is the only American flag seen along the upper Yukon, although we are never out of sight of boats.

And now, as we paused a second on the waves at the lower end of the canyon, ready for the final and more desperate charge, the excited people above us suddenly caught sight of "Old Glory," and such a shout—and then they broke forth in a tempest of cheers and song, Canadians and all, in which the "American Flag," "Dixie," "Marching Through Georgia," and "John Brown" were heard; anything

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

to give vent to the pent-up hearts as we rode the mad charge into the flying white battle horses.

They smote us right in the breast till the waters plunged ten feet in the air and drenched even the captain away back at the helm. The oarsmen were knocked down, but again they grasped their oars and again we plunged on and again they were knocked down and the boat was sent reeling to the right. And then from our rear the rushing cataract came and we spun almost like a top, drifting and tossing as if from one white horse to another as a toy. The captain now guided his boat from the bow.

Again the barge was knocked around and whirled about in the white sea of white horses until the captain once more stood in the stern. Of course there was wild excitement with us—some of us—and there were oaths from the grand old captain, for his boatmen did not understand the nautical terms of the old sea-dog and Alaska steamer captain; and so confusion followed and the oaths often came like a thunderstorm.

That is, in brief, the story of the most daring enterprise in which I ever took part; and I am no child in either years or adventure. Our crew and passengers are all Americans. One is an old Yankee soldier of the Civil War. Two are from Illinois, and are father and son, the boy but fifteen. It makes me proud to be an American when I find such courage and cool heads in a lot of men from far apart, who were strangers but yesterday, and who are entirely, as a rule, untrained to handling water craft. Captain McCormick was born and reared on the shores of Lake Erie. He is tall, strong, and has a voice like a lion. But we did not know he had such a voice till we were in the whirlpool and the foaming canyon, and had charged into the camp of wild white battle horses.

We have no official survey of the canyon and falls as yet, but the canyon is simply a white sea of foam in a cleft of black basalt, and it is said to be, by mountaineers and boatmen, eighty feet wide and three-fourths of a mile long. Some idea of its velocity may be had from the fact that the parties on the bluff above, who were waiting to get their own boats through, and hence were deeply interested, held their watches on us from start to finish, and found that we

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made the plunge and pass in one minute forty-five seconds. The canyon and falls together make up a dash of two and a half miles. The falls are counted the more perilous because of the hidden rocks. While I have been writing this, two more large boats, not loaded, have come through.

Oh for England's old-time thunder !
Oh for England's bold sea-men,
When we banged her over, under,
And she banged us back again !

*Aug. 7. — We tented in an aspen park, a world of waters before us and behind us, and almost entirely around us, for the river debouching into the lake is many miles wide. Our beautiful camp, at the head of beautiful Lake La Barge with its one island, was also in a graveyard. Here we were not troubled by mosquitoes; they seem not to like the quaking and restless aspen leaves. I learn that they are not found in these sweet groves, as a rule. A dolorous loon kept diving and disappearing between his melancholy cries as some men with Winchesters took turns at trying to hit the red crown that blossomed from his black head. And then a great white owl, as white as his melancholy companion was black, and as mournful as any board in the grass at the head of a grave, came out to see with his great big eyes, if he could see in the golden twilight, what the men were shooting at. I expected the men to turn loose on the owl with a will. They did not. Quietly they sat waiting for the loon to come back. Quietly they suddenly sat down on the edge of the steep bluff by the graves. Quietly they sat there with their guns in their laps across their knees. The loon came back at last, close by, too, but they did not lift a hand nor say a word.

The fact is, they had suddenly seen something else: a white, white face upturned to the great white moon from without the swirling water; then another white face, then another, swirling and sweeping around and around and around.

They sat there in the golden, awe-inspiring Arctic twilight, silent, a loon in the water, with his crimson crown at their feet, a snow-white owl as big as a pillow at their side, the six dead men in their graves under the grass there, and none could say which of all

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

was the most silent — the dead men under the grass, the great owl out of the aspen grove at their side, the crimson-crowned loon at their feet or the armed argonauts with their rifles lying across their laps, with their weary feet dipping to the dark, still waters.

Then the loon cried again and was gone, the owl lifted like a little white cloud back into the aspen trees and the men melted away one by one in silence to their tents.

'T is a land so far through the dead, white weather
That the sun falls weary and flushed and red :
'T is a land so far that you wonder whether
If God would know it should you fall dead ;
That the sea and sky seem coming together,
Seem closing together as a book that is read.

'I named the great stars that seemed to perch on the peaks and steeps close at either hand as we ascended the ice floor of the Yukon, "Cathedral stars" simply because they looked it at the time, although ordinarily they seemed to be normal stars, except that they were incredibly large and their five horns far brighter than rays of the sun. But when a seam or stream of flame would burst from the edge of the river's bed and suddenly take possession, for a few seconds, of heaven and earth, they would flare up like things of life, their five horns of gold pointing straight up like cathedral spires. Then as suddenly all would be black, umber, amber, cobalt, and the great, glittering stars again would be normal. I had, to my dismay, as a hired scribe when trying to get from Klondike to the Bering sea by way of the Yukon — 1897 — found the river closed at the edge of the Arctic circle. It was nearly two thousand miles to the sea, all ice and snow, with not so much as a dog-track before me and only midnight 'round about me. There was nothing to do but to try to get back to my cabin on the Klondike. In the line of my employment I kept a journal of the solitary seventy-two days and nights — mostly night — spent in the silent and terrible ascent of the savage sea of ice. But enough ; a tithe of the scenes, the colors, the unnatural phenomena in these lines would be weary work and dreary reading. Nor have I time or disposition, even in this note, to explain, urge or argue. I have resorted to this form of expression only to give a few facts in a





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matter of which I was forced to see much, and should know a little something worth noting.

Briefly, then, "The Borealis race," as seen even by Burns in Scotland, is a substance. It is not only visible and varied, but it is tangible and subject to the law of gravitation, although a certain sort of electricity. It is born of friction; yet it is as cold as the electric force which we have harnessed is hot; and I believe that a full charge of it, when suddenly bursting from a rent or fissure in the ice, is deadly; else why do the dogs fall down and whine when they hear and see it shoot up too near at hand?

I can no more account for the manifold colors than I can for the little gathering of cardinal hues when you smite the transparent ice covering a lake or river. I can only say that it would take the keen eyes of a Lyons silk-weaver to distinguish and name the colors that burst up through the ice from the groaning, grinding waters of the Yukon; but the prevailing color is positive; that is, red, yellow, saffron, crimson and so on. And these seem most forceful if they do not burst forth at an angle and collide and carrom and burnish the walls 'round about. They seem to influence the stars, as they leap up, up and up. But the colder colors seem more slow and heavy. I once saw a slanting, steel-colored column break overhead and fall to pieces right in my path. It lay like a dull, mobile smoke on the snow for some seconds. As the dogs sat down and whined, I jerked off a glove and tried to take some of it in my hand. I may have fancied it, but it seemed to sting and tingle like a little battery; and it surely was as cold as death.

I spent some time with the Bishop of Selkirk, on Mission Island, trying to get some light on all this, for he had been hereabouts for near thirty years; but the good man seemed to depend on what he had read, rather than what he had seen, contenting himself with admiring the works of God and the glory of it all. He gave me his London book, "The Bible Under the Northern Lights," from which I have pilfered generously.

When I told him that I had come to a positive conclusion on the points set down, he said: "Well, maybe it all comes from friction, but you must know that the same phenomena is seen at Great Slave Lake,

as well as on the seas of northern Greenland. No, it is as well to say that it is all the glory of God."

I can only answer that the ice is groaning and grinding in the rise and fall of tides around Greenland and like seabanks to the north, quite as well as along the Yukon, only there the forces are not confined, and so appear only in the heavens in variable bodies, instead of in sudden bursts and shafts, as here. But it is not so easy to account for the Lights on Great Slave Lake. I must leave the phenomena there for those who care to look further.

* "Home is the hunter
Home from the hills,
Home is the sailor
Home from the sea."

Nothing proves more entirely to me the patent of Robert Louis Stevenson to immortality, than his love of Samoa, and his selection of this magnificent isolation for his final home. As Napoleon will forever be Emperor of Saint Helena, so will Stevenson be Lord of Samoa to the end.

Far, far away such cradled Isles
As Jason dreamed and Argos sought
Surge up from endless watery miles!
And thou, the pale high priest of thought,
The everlasting high throned king
Of fair Samoa! Shall I bring
Sweet sandal-wood? Or shall I lay
Rich wreaths of California's bay
From sobbing maidens? Stevenson,
Sleep well. Thy work is done; well done!
So bravely, bravely done!

"The best hearted and most entirely just and generous people I ever lived amongst are, or rather were the Hawaiians, for they are fast passing to the beyond.

Our treatment of this dusky race, is one of the crimes of the past century.

Fair land of flowers, land of flame,
Of sun-born seas, of sea-born clime,
Of clouds low shepherded and tame
As white pet sheep at shearing time,
Of great, white, generous high-born rain,
Of rainbows builded not in vain —
Of rainbows builded for the feet
Of love to pass dry-shod and fleet
From isle to isle, when smell of musk
'Mid twilight is, and one lone star
Sits in the brow of dusk.



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Oh, dying, sad-voiced, sea-born maid !
And plundered, dying, still sing on.
Thy breast against the thorn is laid—
Sing on, sing on, sweet dying swan.
How pitiful ! And so despoiled
By those you fed, for whom you toiled !
Aloha ! Hail you, and farewell,
Far echo of some lost sea-shell !
Some song that lost its way at sea,
Some sea-lost notes of nature, lost,
That crying, came to me.

Dusk maid adieu ! One sea-shell less !
Sad sea-shell silenced and forgot.
O Rachel in the wilderness,
Wail on ! Your children they are not.
And they who took them, they who laid
Hard hand, shall they not feel afraid ?
Shall they who in the name of God
Robbed and enslaved, escape His rod ?
Give me some after-world afar
From these hard men, for well I know
Hell must be where they are.

* * * * *

' Ye Cyprians of fashion, ye whited, cursed mothers !
Yea, as the Christ cursed the barren fig tree,
With your one sickly branch where a dozen should be—
It were better ye never were born to be mothers,
Or, millstone at neck, ye be cast in the sea.
Ye are dried, wrinkled peppers in a dried-up pod,
Ye are hated of men and abhorred of God !

Oh give me good mothers ! Yea, great, glad mothers,
Proud mothers of dozens, indeed, twice ten ;
Fair mothers of daughters and mothers of men,
With old-time clusters of sisters and brothers,
When grand Greeks lived like to gods, and when
Brave mothers of men, strong-breasted and broad,
Did exult in fulfilling the purpose of God.

Yea, give me grand mothers, old world mothers,
Who peopled strong, lusty, loved Germany,
Till she pushed the Frank from the Rhine to the sea.
Yea, give me mothers to love, and none others ;
Blessed, beautiful mothers of men for me,
For they, they have loved in the brave old way,
And for this all honor for aye and a day.

Oh ye of the West, ye ultimate mothers,
Ye firmest of foot and most mighty of hand,
Dominion is yours, through the whole wide land,
To the end of the world. For who but your brothers,
And men of your breasts led the Pioneer band,
Led west to the sea ? Who hewed the red way ?
Yea, who are the captains that lead us today ?

—From "*The Baroness of New York*," *London and New York City, 1877, Pages 136-7.*

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

A PREFATORY POSTSCRIPT.

When, like a sentinel on his watch tower, the President, with his divine audacity and San Juan valor, voiced the real heart of the Americans against "race suicide," I hastened to do my part, in my own way, ill or well, in holding up his hands on the firing line. For I had wrought here and fought here while he was still in school. See note¹ on page 98? But I was alone then, and as the stork had not so notably disappeared from the homes of those best able to welcome and entertain him, my book was no more welcome to them then, than the stork is now.

However, I venture this new book with confidence, not only because it is right, proper, clean, courageous, but now seems opportune. "Let the galled jade wince!" I give no quarter and ask none, except pardon for errors incident to great haste. I cry aloud from my mountain top, as a seer, and say: The cherry blossom bird of Nippon must be more with us, else another century and prolific Canada, like another Germany from the north, may descend upon us and take back train loads of tribute. We are coming to be too entirely Frenchish.

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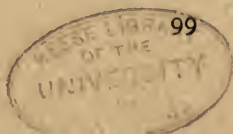
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